

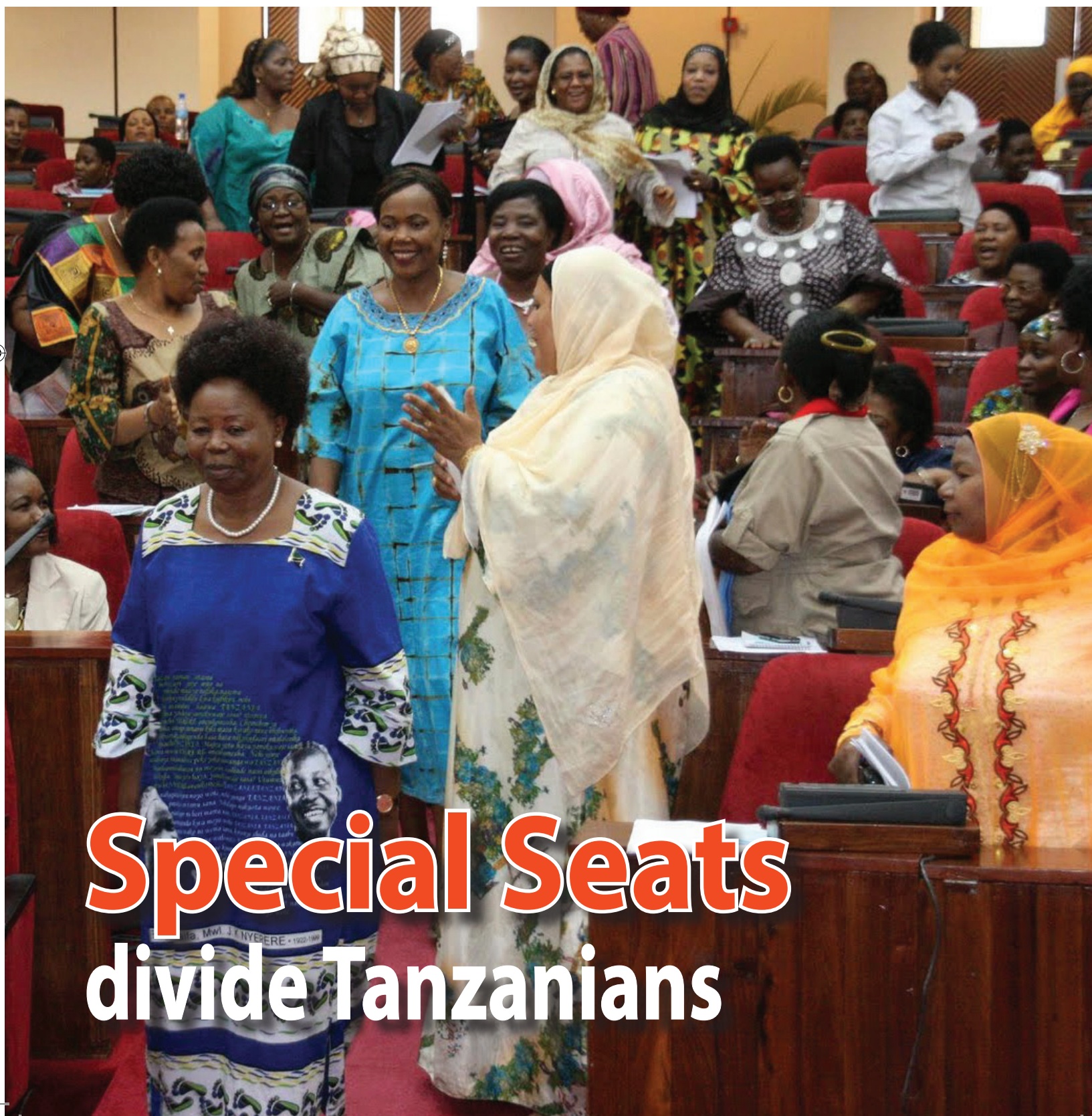


Sauti ya Siti

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Special Seats divide Tanzanians



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TAMWA



Sauti ya Siti

Executive Director - TAMWA
Edda Sanga

Editors
Deodatus Balile
Lilian Timbuka

Layout & Design
Gurnam Ajit

Tanzania Media Women's Association
P. O. Box 8981, Sinza - Mori, Dar es Salaam
Tel: +255 22 2772681
Fax: +255 22 2772681
Email: tamwa@tamwa.org

Zanzibar Office:
P. O. Box 741, Tunguu,
Zanzibar, Tanzania
Tel: +255 773 747 252
Email: tamwazanzibar@tamwa.org

Website: www.tamwa.org

EDITORIAL

CCM has shown the way, parties should support women aspirants

On October 25th this year Tanzania is holding general elections for the presidency, parliamentary and councillorship. Elections are an important indicator of flourishing democracy for any country in the world. Free and fair elections strengthen peace, harmony and the economy. Normally, new governments come with new policies for national development.

Tanzania attained her independence in 1961 and since then has been holding free and fair elections. In 1965 Tanzania cancelled the multiparty system to embark on single party system. The changes introduced a system of party supremacy, one candidate for presidency and two competing candidates for parliamentary and councillorship for every contested constituency or ward, respectively.

The elections continued to be free and fair until 1992 when the multiparty system was restored. Unfortunately in both the single party and multiparty systems, the concept of gender equality was not practiced. Forgetting this important component, meant women participated in the elections remained spectators of male candidates.

As a result, women did not get the opportunity to be elected to decision making positions like the presidency, parliamentary and councillorship. All along the main problem remained to be male chauvinism and the patriarchy system which is deeply entrenched in most African countries where society members consider men as true leaders of family and society. ►► pg 4



CCM has shown the way, parties should support women aspirants

Following efforts by gender equality activists, gender parity outcry has started to be heard. In 1995 the government introduced special seats for parliamentary and councillorship as a way to empower women. It was also the same year that Rose Lugendo came forward to aspire for presidential nomination through CCM. In 2005 the number of women aspirants increased to three namely, Anna Senkoro (PPT-Maendeleo), Chiku Abwao and Maulida Komu through CHADEMA. No one was elected. At constituency level in 2010 only 9 percent of women won parliamentary seats.

This year the number has increased to seven women who contested presidency through the ruling party CCM. Aspirants were Ambassador Amina Salum Ali, Dr. Mwele Malecela, Monica Mbega, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Ritta Ngowi, Hellen Elinawinga and Veronica Kazimoto. Dr. Migiro and Amina made it to the top three.

Two women making it to the top three was a boost to the efforts of Human Rights and Gender activists. More so after, Dr.

John Magufuli, who won party primaries, picked Samia Suluhu Hassan his running mate. This means if Dr. Magufuli wins the presidency, for the first time in the history Tanzania will be having a woman as a Vice President. Anna Mghwira the flag bearer of ACT

- Wazalendo is another woman vying for the top post in the country.

All along TAMWA and other gender and human rights activists have been fighting for women to hold high decision making positions including the presidency, vice presidency and premier. We believe this is a good start and we hope other political parties will emulate this gesture towards women who have capability of holding such positions.

This Edition of Sauti ya Siti which is funded by Ford Foundation is geared to applaud the women who have dared and encourage other women to take the forms to become parliamentarians and councillors. This is from the belief that women are as good as men. ●



Bukwimba: I was branded barmaid, prostitute ... yet I won

By Beatrice Bandawe

In 2009, Faustine Lwilomba, the then Parliamentarian for Busanda Constituency in Geita Region died in India due to multiple complications while undergoing medical treatment. Lwilomba had been sponsored by Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) to become a parliamentarian in the 2005 general elections.

According to the elections law, whenever a parliamentarian dies 12 months before the next

election date, automatically the constituency has to hold a By-election to fill-in the vacant post to represent citizens in the decision making organ; the Parliament.

This was the moment when a determined lady, Lolesia Bukwimba (44), decided to enter the race to represent Busanda people into the august house through CCM.

Bukwimba defied the unfounded myth that women cannot compete against men especially in the By-elections in a constituency where party politics exert undue pressure on the candidates.

"It was my first time to contest elections through a constituency. I encouraged myself that as women we can if we are determined," says Bukwimba who was only 38 when that challenge came before her.

The By-election involved other candidates from Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), Civic United Front (CUF) and United Democratic Party (UDP), who were all men.

Despite being the only woman in the contest, Bukwimba had the voters' backing as they were the ones who had requested her to join the race. ▶▶ pg 6



Lolensia Bukwimba, a Member of Parliament for Busanda Constituency addressing Mgsu Ward residents in June, this year when Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Secretary General, Abdulrahman Kinana visited Geita region.



Bukwimba: I was branded barmaid, prostitute ... yet I won

The campaign was demanding, but she says when the results were announced she was declared the overall winner with 29,242 votes, defeating her closest competitor from CHADEMA who got 22,799 votes. The difference which separated the two candidates was 6,443.

Bukwimba says when she declared her intention to contest Busanda Constituency By-election, she got unquestionable support from her spouse.

"The act of involving my husband in my decision to contest the constituency and his consent, encouraged me to prove that I can," said Bukwimba.

Previously, Bukwimba was working with a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) and was a Manager for a Microfinance Bank known as FEDA headquartered in Ubungo, Dar es Salaam.

Challenges

Bukwimba says members of the society regard women as inferior to lead men because of long standing traditions and culture. "There is a notion among some men that women cannot lead men, and for sure that was the situation in the constituency I contested," she says.

During the campaign period the men candidates from other political parties used this weapon to dismantle her mission but they failed. They used all insults possible. "They called me a barmaid, a prostitute and many other bad names to discourage me, but I stood firm and did not lose the sight because of their words," she says.

She says throughout the campaign she did not respond to their insults, but rather she capitalized on her mission to better serve the public by referring to iconic Tanzania women leaders who have served at national and international level.

She kept mentioning successful women leaders like Anne Makinda, the speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, the former United Nations Deputy Secretary General and currently the Minister for Justice and Constitution Affairs, Dr. Getrude Mongella the former Ukerewe Constituency parliamentarian and U.N. Assistant Secretary General and Secretary General for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, without forgetting Professor Anna Tibaijuka, the former Executive Director of UN-Habitat to prove the fact that women are capable of becoming

leaders.

"I also kept reminding them the saying; 'When you educate a woman, you educate the whole society,'" says Bukwimba adding that the voters understood her points and elected her.

Corruption

Most women are afraid to contest in the constituencies following the experience that most men, who are wealthier, corrupt voters. However, she managed to convince voters without necessarily dishing money and won Bukwimba Constituency.

Apart from winning it in 2009 after the death of her predecessor, she was re-elected in the 2010 general elections and she is determined to do the same in 2015 without having to use corruption to gain votes.

Constituency priorities

When she was elected she decided to deal with problems concerning social needs. She discovered that people needed electricity, water, education and all weather roads. She says most girls were enrolling in schools, but the dropout rate was high, hence education became her first priority. ▶▶ pg 7

"I visited several schools to motivate citizens on the importance of education, because I personally studied in a similar environment," she says. She encouraged parents to take their children to schools because with education they are likely to become prominent leaders in the nation.

"The people were highly motivated; others said they are taking their kids to schools for them to become future parliamentarians like Bukwimba... It has encouraged me a lot because in the future they will bring changes," she says.

Apart from motivating them, she supported 16 Ward Secondary schools by giving them books and computers. Every school received five computers, which she got from her sponsors. She managed to secure positions for 500 pupils to get post secondary education where 400 of them have so far secured employment. On the part of electricity, she has managed to facilitate electricity connection for nine wards out of 16.

Special seats

Bukwimba says special seats were formulated as a forum for women to learn politics while in the parliament and to give them the courage to stand on their own in the future. She says some women who entered the parliament through special seats are proving to be good leaders.

"Being a parliamentarian through special seats does not mean it was an easy ride, because these seats are also highly contested within the party similar to the constituencies." Bukwimba says parliamentarians through

Bukwimba: I was branded barmaid, prostitute ... yet I won



constituencies are responsible for their constituencies, while special seat parliamentarians are responsible for the regions from where they are appointed.

Advice to women

Bukwimba advises women to be brave whenever they are determined to do anything. She says even if people will discourage them, they should not listen to them because some people do not want to see others succeeding.

"When I entered the contest, there are some who told me and advised me to go for special seats, but I maintained my stance and my bravery helped me," says Bukwimba.

She says most women are capable, but are afraid of abuse from men in the political forums something that deters them from coming forward to contest in constituencies.

"There are educated and capable women who can become leaders, but they fail to come forward due to fear. These are just thinking, if they get the courage to stand with men they will win them," she says ●

1. In the first multiparty elections in 1995 only 16 percent of parliamentarians were women. Out of 232 constituencies, women managed to win only eight seats. Those eight women were joined by 37 special seats appointees to make a total of 45 women in the house of 269 parliamentarians.
2. The number of women in the parliament has increased from 16 percent in 1995 to 36 percent by 2015. This follows affirmative action by the government to amend the constitution in 2005 to introduce a requirement of 30 percent women and a way of achieving this goal, special seats in the parliament.
3. The number of women in the parliament has increased from 62 women out of 288 parliamentarians in 2005 to 127 out of 357 in 2015.

Can women garner 50% through constituencies?

By Elizabeth Edward

Four years ago President Jakaya Kikwete initiated the process to enact a new constitution by passing the Constitutional Review Act, 2011, which among other things intended to redress the injustice against women in the country.

The process started by forming the Constitution Review Commission (CRC) which collected citizens' views across the country for their opinion on what they want in the new constitution.

One of the public outcries was gender inequality in the current constitution where the public and women activists want equal representation in parliament.

The 50:50 representation idea aimed at having an equal number of women and men in parliament through constituencies unlike the current system where women are only 9 percent compared to 91 percent men.

Overall, women account for 36 percent in the current parliament of which 27 percent entered the parliament in 2010 through special seats appointment.

After collecting the citizens' opinion and through a turbulent debate in the Constituent Assembly, Article 129(4) provided for equal representation in parliament and in other levels of decision making organs.

The Drafted Constitution will be a great boost for

women in the fight for gender equality, but with the uncertainty over the fate of the draft constitution, how can women bridge the 14 percent gap through constituencies into parliament in the forthcoming elections?

The Director for Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP) Lilian Liundi responds to the preceding question by saying it can be possible to bridge that gap only if political parties give deserved opportunities to women in the October 2015 elections. ► pg 9



Women Members of Parliament entering the august house recently in Dodoma.

She says without a new constitution there is no way women can garner 50 percent to parliament and other decision making organs unless the political parties which have the mandate to give that opportunity to women do the needful.

"Most political parties are entangled with male chauvinism. They do not trust women for fear of losing constituencies (to their competitors) this has forced them to continue to avail opportunities to men and oppress women," says Liundi.

She also proposes the need for the Constitution to clearly state that when the President is a man, the Vice President or the Prime Minister should be a woman.

"We understand naturally men enjoy power, but this issue should be looked at differently so that we reach a point where women hold top leadership positions in the country. Otherwise the struggle continues.

"If the country is governed by the Constitution even a woman can shoulder this duty without worry. There is no reason to put women aside as if leadership is only for men," says Liundi.

Anna Sangai, an activist for Women Rights says due to complicated party political systems women are denied the opportunity to contest through constituencies.

"Personally, I believe a leader be it a president or a parliamentarian is guided by the Constitution. However, most political parties believe only men deserve to lead something which denies women the opportunity," says Sangai.

Can women garner 50% through constituencies?



While analysts are worried with the 50:50 target, women aspirants hold a different view.

Sada Kabezi, a parliamentarian aspirant in Kaliua constituency through Chadema, says her integrity and hardworking nature give her confidence that she will be appointed by her party to contest that constituency come October.

"Even if I am contesting against men, my capability within the party is known. I am a very able woman who is determined to liberate my fellow women and bring development in my constituency" says Kabezi.

Jesca Kishoa, a parliamentarian aspirant for Iramba West through NCCR-Mageuzi believes her party will appoint her to contest that constituency because of her capability and that gender has no room to stop her dream.

"I will stand as a candidate. My gender cannot become a barrier

for my party to appoint me. I believe my party will give me the opportunity based on my capability and performance and not on the gender criterion," she says.

Ruth Mpangala who is aspiring for CCM councillorship for Buzurugwa Ward in Ilemela Constituency Mwanza, believes she has served the ward well and will be appointed to represent the party.

"There are many aspirants, but I gauge myself according to my capability and my participation in the ward development. I believe my party will appoint me to contest this post," she says.

Goodluck Temba resident in Mbagala Dar es Salaam, believes the capability and efforts by women themselves can help them to reach the 50 percent target.

Temba advises that professional and capable women should be elected regardless of their gender.

"Personally I don't see any problem to elect a woman if she has same qualifications and capabilities as men. This is my calling to other men that we should not look at gender, rather at individual's capability," he says.

Daniel Kitwana, a third year student at the University of Dar es Salaam says women should be the first to show their readiness to achieve the 50 percent target and will be supported by men.

He says self confidence is very important for women, because by step depicting their capability it will be hard for men to oppress them. ●



Ester Bulaya, a special seat parliamentarian who has crossed party forums from Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) to Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) in July, this year addressing electorates in Bunda town.

Ester Bulaya: Confidence kills male chauvinism

By Angela Kiwia

Ester Bulaya, is a parliamentarian through special seats appointment. In her five years tenure in parliament she has been advocating women and youth rights across political parties.

Bulaya, who has moved from the current ruling CCM to the opposition CHADEMA, is one of promising young women likely to be more than a member of parliament. While some women who entered parliament through special seats have stayed in the same status for more than 20 years, Bulaya is now eyeing a constituency after serving in special seats for just five years.

Bulaya spoke to Sauti ya Siti and expressed her expectations, vision and advises youth and women aspirants to be firm and focused to win the forthcoming elections so as to lead the nation in the right direction. She insists that confidence is an important tool for women to defeat male chauvinism.

Question: What motivates you to contest a constituency?

Bulaya: I understand this is my fundamental right like other human rights. Besides, it is my unquestionable intention to serve the Bunda people through this parliamentary seat. Also, I want to prove, that women can be representatives not necessarily through special seats only. It is not a necessity that every parliamentarian woman should enter the august house through special seats.

Question: Since you expressed the interest to contest Bunda Constituency have you experienced any hardships?

Bulaya: There are many challenges in Bunda Constituency and other parts of this country. On my part I find the most disturbing problem is the unfounded propaganda against women that women cannot lead men. This is not the time to wage draconian propaganda we should be assessed on our qualifications rather than using gender to deny women leadership opportunities.

Question: Mara region is said to be the home of male chauvinism. How are you prepared to break it?

Bulaya: There is a lot of male chauvinism in Mara. However, it is time for societies to agree to change the perception and get away with this problem. Civic education is a must. Women confidence is fundamental to dismantle male chauvinism. I thank God that I have reduced this problem in Bunda because I sit with elders to discuss this matter. This pleases me, and proves there are people who are supporting me. ►► pg 11



Ester Bulaya: Confidence kills male chauvinism

Question: Is your family fully supporting you?

Bulaya: I thank God a lot that the family and all friends support me. We sit together and talk about the challenges facing Bunda Constituency.

Question: What do you advise other women in the country?

Bulaya: Women have to get prepared psychologically. This is because society fears men. If we lose fear against men and join hands we will have tremendous increase of women in the decision making organs including constituencies and as parliamentarians.

This is not the time for women to be discouraged by thinking that men are the right candidates and have got unquestionable powers in the country.

Question: What specific challenges do you think you are likely to face in your constituency aspiration?

Question: The big challenge is failure to know who I will face and how that candidate is prepared and contesting with people who have a lot of money and the

male chauvinism in our society. However, Bunda is my home place. Therefore, I have met the elders, and the youth and have talked to them and thus I have no Problem in the constituency.

Question: Have you researched to understand your chances of winning?

Bulaya: On the question of research I can say I am accepted by the voters because whatever I have done is seen. It is like Bunda had no parliamentarian. I have been their appointed parliamentarian doing more work than the constituency parliamentarian. I have managed to coordinate the youths and established Bulaya Cup which is bringing up youth talents and availing them the opportunity to meet in Bunda.

The question of winning the elections, I am sure that if I am appointed to contest the constituency I will win by a landslide.

Question: What is your opinion about this year's elections and the woman's position?

Bulaya: This year the election will be a huge challenge, but

it is important that women understand no one has a permanent leadership position. There are qualified women who have come forward. Therefore, it is our duty to continue to motivate more women to come forward in this years' election. I am proud of the fact that unlike previous years many women have registered to vote. This is an indication that they want to be in the decision making process of their country.

Question: What is the youth's position towards the general elections?

Bulaya: Personally I have been in the front line to fight for youth's rights without looking at their party ideologies, religion or tribe. It is important the youths understand that if they unite and work together, even if they have different party ideologies, they will build a developed nation. Youths should register and turn in big numbers to vote, come October. ●



Women have registered in numbers; the remaining question is whether they are motivated enough to vote for follow women in the coming elections.

"Turn gender equality into a national value"

By Rachel Kyala

Gender equality should be recognized as one of the national values to vindicate the country's political will to honour international resolutions, activists say.

Proponents of that recognition say it will lay the foundation for building a nation free of gender inequality between men and women, something that will stop the oppression of women in the country.

They also argue that gender equality has to be infiltrated into the social, political and economical sectors as a way to empower women.

The Director of Equality for Growth (EfG) Jane Magigita,

an organization designed to empower informal business women says through a project dubbed 'Mwanamke Sokoni' women have been helped to build their self confidence and they have assumed various leadership positions.

"A woman in the country cannot secure leadership position at different levels be it local government, village, ward, councillorship and parliamentarian without being sponsored by a political party,"

says Magigita adding that this system denies opportunity to women who are not interested in party politics.

"This is a challenge in political parties because they have not put strategies, including policy and regulations to empower women to secure various leadership positions," says Magigita.

She says women are oppressed economically, therefore contesting any political seat needs money something some women cannot afford. She adds that party manifestos and promises to empower women are there, but are rarely implemented.

While acknowledging that there are few women ambassadors, ministers and deputy ministers, she warns of the danger of the lack of unity among women themselves.

"Cooperation amongst women is minimal especially during campaign and voting time. May be it is caused by jealousy for fellow women," says Magigita.

She says some women who get power have a tendency of hanging onto power for so long without leaving the posts to give opportunity to other women. She refers to some special seat women have served for 30 years in the same capacity. Magigita also warns women to stop gossiping against each other.

She says women should be the first to solve their challenges by working hard and professionally to achieve the best. ► pg 13



Edda Sanga, a veteran journalist and former Acting Director for Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam, says that based on the experience of those who held various positions members of the Society now understand and accept that women are capable leaders.

Sanga says the only problem is the old mentality amongst Tanzanians that a woman cannot lead others or themselves because they lack muscles like men.

"Also because of a woman's biological setup that during hard times she easily cries this makes the public trust them less," says Sanga.

Sanga adds that members of the society believe only men can administer them giving the example that baby boys are regarded as powerful and true leaders compared to baby girls.

She says male chauvinism is deeply rooted in the country and that is why the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) has been fighting it since its

inception in 1987. During elections, she says women are rarely supported by members of the society.

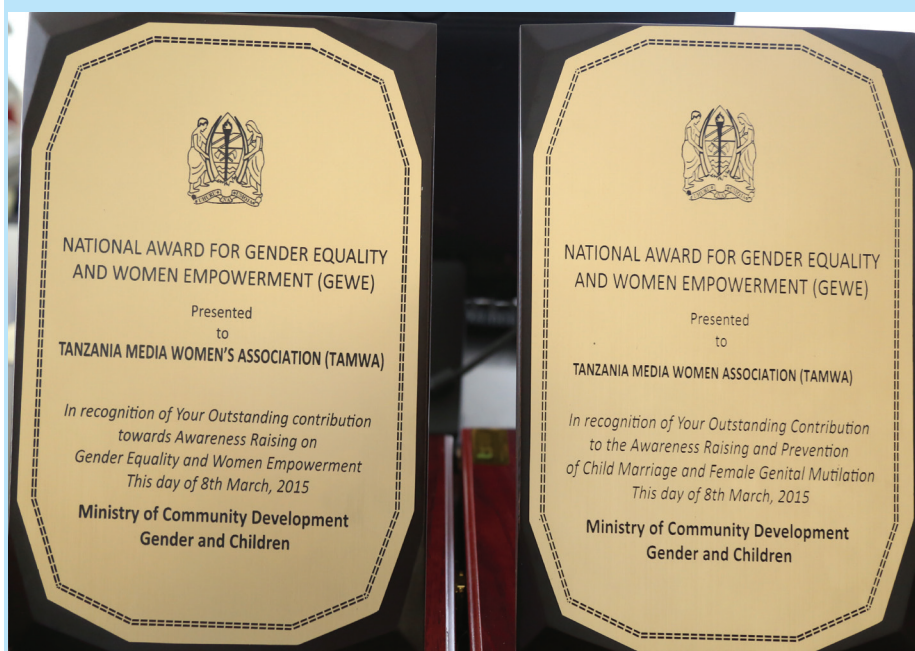
However, Sanga says Tanzania has a convincing number of women leaders at the district commissioners' level and various directors, but they are still lagging behind at the ministerial level.

The Coordinator for the Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform (ULINGO), Dr. Ave Maria Semakafu, says the current system does not allow women to become leaders though they want to be.

She gives an example that in the forthcoming elections no political party is prepared to nominate women as their candidates in the constituency to become Members of Parliament for fear of losing the elections, which is wrong and hence the environment becomes not permissive for women.

She adds that lack of economic power is a disadvantage to women as some aspirants spent up to 35 million for a meeting to declare their candidacy something which discourages women to come forward as many have no financial means. ●

"Turn gender equality into a national value"



Women presidency aspirants high

By Leon Bahati

Tanzania reverted to multiparty democracy in 1992 and held the first general elections in 1995, where only one woman expressed interest to take up the top civil servant post; the presidency.



Dr. Asha Rose Migiro, is one of seven women aspirants who expressed interest to contest presidency through the ruling party ticket, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). Though she did not win it, she ended up in the top three finalists, where Dr. John Magufuli was handed CCM flag for the coming elections.

Before the reintroduction of multiparty system, voting for the presidency in the single party system was a “Yes” or “No” and with only one candidate in the race it was practically not a competition.

To date Tanzania has held four multiparty elections where 25 candidates in aggregate have tried their fortune, but only two have managed to usurp the top post namely, Benjamin William Mkapa (1995 -2005) and Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete (2005 – 2015).

Women have been invisible in the process. Some tried within their parties at preliminary stages but only one, Anna Senkoro through PPT – Maendeleo, reached the point of being appointed by the National Electoral Commission in 2005. In essence she paved the way for others, but unfortunately in 2010 none of the women replicated this achievement.

Senkoro garnered 18,783 votes in 2005 equal to 0.17 percent out of 11.4 million voters. She was contesting against 10 men including president Kikwete.

The quest for the presidency has not only been on Tanzania Mainland. Available records indicate in 2005 Sauti ya Umma Party (SAU) appointed Mariam Omar to contest Zanzibar presidency. She received 335 votes out of 451,008 voters equaling 0.07 percent.

Political parties and women

It is an established norm that presidential aspirants first have to contest within their political parties before being appointed. Even at this initial level, the number of women expressing interest to be appointed by their parties is not encouraging.

Between 2005 and 2010 apart from Senkoro, three other women expressed their interest within their political parties to contest the presidency but none succeeded. Rose Lugendo tried through CCM in 1995, while Chiku Abwao and Maulida Komu tried their fortunes through CHADEMA in 2005. None of them succeeded to cross this preliminary stage. However, Komu was appointed as running mate for Mr. Freeman Mbowe.

2015 General Elections

In this year's general elections, seven women had expressed interest to aspire for the presidency through the ruling party – CCM. The aspirants are Ambassador Amina Salum Ali, Dr. Mwele Malecela, Monica Mbega, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Ritta Ngowi, Veronica Kazimoto and Hellen Elinawinga. While the number is commendable, it is a drop in the ocean compared to the forty two men who expressed their interest through the same ruling party. ►► pg 15

Anna Mgwira is another woman contesting presidency through ACT - Wazalendo.

Sophia Simba, the chairperson of CCM Women Wing, Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania (UWT) and Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children says the trend worries her and she has been encouraging more women to come forward.

Simba, says UWT does not care which party sponsors a woman to vie for the presidency and will support any woman appointed to contest the post.

Women and the Presidency

Chiku Abwao, a Special Seat parliamentarian says women are seeing the presidency as a gigantic post for women to manage. "Most women in this country fear a big responsibility. Most believe they cannot manage immense power (presidency)," says Abwao.

Asked why she thinks women are reluctant for the presidency, Abwao says before thinking of the presidency a woman asks herself a lot of questions. "Has there ever been a woman Prime Minister, Vice President... When the answer is no to these questions, a woman will say it is hard to jump on top of such powers," says Abwao.

Monica Mbega, who was presidential aspirant through the ruling party – CCM while admitting to the challenge of male chauvinism, believes Tanzanians are now educated and ready to be led by qualified women and that in any contested elections challenges are there for both men and women.

Women presidency aspirants high

Mbega contested in the 2010 general election for Iringa Constituency where she lost by 800 Votes. In taking up the presidential aspirant form she is an example of women who are determined to achieve their dreams and are undefeated by defeat.

Amina Salum Ali, another presidential aspirant through CCM says Tanzania has so many women capable of contesting the presidency but did not have to come forward because of fear and distorted beliefs that to contest for presidency one has to have a lot of money. "But I am saying it is not true. They need to come forward in numbers to give their contribution to this nation," she says.

Prof. Penina Mlama, the Chair for Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam says Tanzania has a lot of women capable of becoming president, but it is just that in Tanzania,

historically, there has never been a woman president.

"There are countries like Liberia and Brazil which are being led by women presidents and they are doing fine. We also have capable women, I am not worried at all," says Prof. Mlama.

Deus Kibamba, the Chairman for the Constitution Council says there is a long standing error in the system where women believe they have to be okayed by men in everything they do.

Also, he says women lack financial muscle compared to men, and no wonder men are involved in big scandals of amassing huge fortune.

Kibamba says a woman can only become president or prime minister if this country introduces a regulation which categorically dictates that when a man is a president then a woman should be a vice president or a prime minister. ●



Anna-Mghwira Chairperson and presidential candidate through ACT-Wazalendo

Why did Amina Salum Ali vie for presidency?

Amina Salum Ali is former cabinet minister and the current African Union (AU) Ambassador to the United States. She was among the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) cadres who have picked forms, asking to be allowed run for the presidency of the United Republic of Tanzania in October this year. Our Writer DEOGRATIAS MUSHI interviewed her recently on her political aspiration and what she intends to achieve as the first woman president in Tanzania.



Ambassador Amina Salum Ali displaying CCM presidential nomination forms soon after receiving it at Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) headquarters in Dodoma in June, this year.

Question: What prompted you to run for presidency?

ANSWER: My urge to work with and for women in uplifting their living standards is what has forced me to run for this highest office of our land. I became a politician while I was still a very young woman. I have travelled in different parts of this country, both in the Isles and in the Mainland and I understand well problems which women face.

The majority of women in this country support their families and if they are given better economic opportunities, I am sure they shall automatically improve the society as a whole. Women and children are among the groups that have been left behind in development. I would have liked to change the trend, to enable more women to engage in economic activities, such as agriculture, trade, and other sources of income generation.

Q: You left a big office in Washington DC to vie for presidency. Why?

A: My country Tanzania becomes the first priority when it comes to what I would like to do in my life. I have served Africa, but charity should start at home. I would like my people, especially women, to have better living conditions. I love my country and I am ready to serve it by any means that can make our people's lives better.

Q: According to you, which are the major problems facing women in Tanzania today?

A: Let me first thank the four presidents who have led this country since independence. They have tried their best in improving peoples' living conditions. President Jakaya Kikwete has done a lot in improving the infrastructure and also he has appointed some women as Regional Commissioners, District Commissioners, Members of Parliament, and also Permanent Secretaries in different ministries.

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However, women in Tanzania today face a number of problems including low market prices for their produce which prevent them from being able to afford fertilizer and other inputs for the next season. The control of household income by their husbands means they cannot act on their own, leaving some women to conclude that lack of decision-making power was their biggest constraint, both in agriculture and in their lives.

In Tanzania today, a hungry woman lacks confidence and ability to pursue her rights. We have heard of several cases of gender based violence which end up at family level for fear of incriminating a bread-winner, who once jailed, the family life is also jailed into more troubles.

A hungry woman cannot also have surplus saving to board a daladala or motorcycle to search for justice which is 'located' hundred miles away from her locality. What is the best option for her is not a search for imprisonment of her stubborn husband, but to opt for survival of her starving children. The political struggles brought notable achievements. I would like to see women getting better health care, and also getting social services like water at their neighbourhood. All that is possible if we set proper plans aimed at liberating women.

Q: Some people think that time for a woman to be Tanzania's president has not arrived. What do you tell them?

A: Let me say that this is the right time for a woman to be elected president of this country. We should forget such old mentalities, which have been

Why did Amina Salum Ali vie for presidency?



bypassed by time. We have wonderful experiences to learn from Brazil, Germany, and Liberia where women presidents and premier have done wonders in improving their countries' economies.

We should not be looking at one's gender or sex when it comes to the country's leadership. What is important is the ability, experience, and acceptance. I am sure I possess all the required qualities needed to lead this good country. I know this nation quite well, and I thank my party which has awarded me leadership opportunities. As the African Union's first female ambassador I have been committed to promoting women's rights and children's issues. I am also the founder of Zanzibar Women Welfare Trust, which aims at combating devastating health issues to women and children like HIV/AIDS. As a long-serving Member of Parliament, I have

held various ministerial positions in the Tanzanian government, most recently as minister of state in the office of the chief minister in Zanzibar. I have been a member of Islamic Development Bank Women's Advisory Panel and I have served as a board member of various institutions such as the Tanzania Telecommunication Co. and Mzumbe University in Morogoro, Tanzania. In addition, I have established various capacity-building institutions, including the Presidential Trust Fund for Self-Reliance. I hold a bachelor's degree in economics and an MBA in marketing. People should not be worried at all about my leadership qualities. I have trained and worked both within and outside the country, so I have the knowledge to provide good leadership.

Q: What do you say about your fellow presidential aspirants within CCM?

A: I keenly followed speeches delivered by my fellow presidential hopefuls and I was disappointed that they didn't speak about women and what they intend to help them if they get elected. You cannot talk about how to fight corruption without mentioning women and children rights. I would like to hear them say how they intend to fight gender inequalities and better economic opportunities for women.

Q: How could you improve the country's economy?

A: Tanzania is endowed with a lot of blessings which can make it improve its economy. The highest mountain in Africa - Mount Kilimanjaro is in Tanzania.

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Why did Amina Salum Ali vie for presidency?

Best tourism attractions like Ngorongoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge, and Serengeti can generate a lot of foreign exchange. Vast arable land can improve people's lives if well utilized. Ports in Dar Es Salaam, Tanga and Mtwara can also be good sources of income. Recent discoveries of gas and oil also put the country in good position to improve its economy.

We should also change our mind set as a country, to make sure that we open more local industries that shall produce various goods we need, instead of using our limited foreign exchange to import goods. Currently the majority of the things we consume are imported. Our farm products might fetch better prices if they are bought while processed. Our agriculture should be based on industrialization. The slogan like support Tanzania, buy Tanzania" should be propagated from grass root level. We should further develop the country's infrastructure, factories, telecommunications, and distribution routes to make the country's resources more

accessible to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

If we attract FDI into the country, foreign companies can invest in local workers. Foreign companies can help train and educate the local labour force and hire them, thus creating employment and bringing in more money into the country's economy.

We should stop exporting raw materials and stop unnecessary import manufactured goods from developed countries.

Q: Your views about the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar?

A: If there is a pearl that we should treasure and advocate it is the union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika. Though the founders are no longer there, they have left us as one nation.

Tanzania of 1964 has undergone tremendous changes from single party to multi-party democracy to cope with the global socio-economic and political arrangement.

Tanzanians have prided themselves in having the only Union of the independent states which has been described by many to be unique in Africa since no other states have followed their example. Tanzanians have not been discouraged by the lack of interest on the part of other African states in forging larger political Units in Africa.

Under the 1964's Articles of Union, matters consented were only eleven (11) but now they are more than twenty-three.

Many efforts had been made to establish the East African Federation but the latest

discussions between the three heads of East African states proved unfeasible for the establishment of this political federation.

As far as the economy is concerned, trade activities have increased between the two Union partners benefiting their people. People from the Mainland have been traveling to Zanzibar to buy goods also the same happening for Zanzibaris going to the Mainland for business activities.

The most conspicuous achievement of the Union is that it has existed longer than any other Union of its type in Africa.

Despite the many shortcomings the Tanzanian Union is a shining example of the integration of peoples from two different sovereign nations.

The biggest merit of the Union is that it has guaranteed Tanzanians security and diminished the vulnerability to external threats. So we have enough reasons to maintain this union at all costs.

Q: Your colleagues to the Ikulu were said to have money to support them. What did you have?

A: I don't have money, and I don't think political post should be bought. I had supporters behind me especially women who have vowed to support me. I specifically thank Ms. Anna Abdallah who has supported me since I expressed the will to contest for presidency.

Q: Any word to the local media?

A: I thank both print and electronic media for their coverage, though they have not put me on their front pages. ●





Parliamentarians as seen in the august house in Dodoma ready to start the session recently. Electorates are encouraged to vote more women into this decision making organ.

Special Seats divide Tanzanians

By Reuben Kagaruki

Tanzania will be conducting general elections on October 25th, this year.

A lot of people are expressing their intention to contest to be councilors, parliamentarians and the president of the URT.

As the country heads towards this democratic process, the issue of special seats for women, just like in the constitution process, is once again a topic under discussion. Some Tanzanians have started to rethink about the importance of special seats.

Others question the system used to appoint special seat parliamentarians on claims that some candidates enjoy underserved preference because of religious affiliation, tribalism, corruption and sexual abuse.

Abdulrahman Lugone, the National Elections Officer for Civic United Front (CUF) says their party uses their constitution and regulations passed by the Executive Council to appoint special seats parliamentarians in a transparent way.

He says candidates contest internally through primaries

which is a prime criterion for any member of parliament to qualify for a special seat in CUF.

He says based on their regulation in place women who participate in CUF constituency primaries automatically are included in the list of special seat hopefuls, even if they lost in their respective constituencies. "This is because they have dared, hence we give them an opportunity," says Lugone.

Winning the primaries for CUF is not an automatic qualification for one to be appointed as a representative through special seats because the Executive Council has legal mandate to appoint anyone based on zonal representation, he says.

He says it is impossible for CUF to appoint special seat parliamentarian based on underserved preference, religious affiliation, tribalism and sexual abuse because of the transparent established procedures.

However, he says he cannot rule out the possibility of some candidates using corruption in the process but that is an unaccepted practice in CUF.

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Salama Masoud, a special seat councilor for Temeke Ward (CUF) says she is satisfied with the system used to appoint special seat representatives, though she says some leaders have been using corruption and other illegal means like sexual abuse to secure special seats.

She points an accusing finger to male candidates that during the elections they use corruption to win voters.

"I competed with male candidates at the time of primaries to seek my party nomination for contesting my ward councillorship, but I lost because some people were dishing out 50,000 to 100,000 to voters," says Masoud.

Kulthum Mchuchuri, a special seat parliamentarian (CUF) from Rufiji, commends the system put in place by CUF which leads to appointing special seat representatives saying it eliminates corruption.

She says in the same spirit, CUF has already nominated her to contest for Rufiji Constituency in the forthcoming elections and she did not use a single sent to convince voters.

Nape Nnauye, the Publicity Secretary for Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), says in CCM they have clear established rules and regulations which are adhered to in the process of nominating special seat representatives.

"The procedure to appoint special seat representatives in CCM is known and administered by women themselves, therefore it is not easy to find sexual abuse in the process," says Nnauye adding that nothing can be decided against CCM established regulations.

Special Seats divide Tanzanians



Zainabu Vullu, a special seat Member of Parliament through CCM says accusations of sexual abuse in the process of appointing special seat representatives are unfounded since for CCM the process is administered by the National CCM Women wing (UWT).

Because the nomination is administered by women, there is no possibility of sexual abuse, corruption and tribalism, she says.

She says any man who wants to interfere with electoral processes within CCM women ask him to dress up like themselves in order to qualify to vote, something which turns them away.

Vullu says the process starts from district to national level and the winners from the party list goes to the National Electoral Commission which appoints special seat representatives. Asked whether she will contest for a constituency in the forthcoming elections, Vullu replied not this time.

Joyce John, says most women contest special seats instead of constituencies because they have no financial power. She says this system should be maintained because most men corrupt voters and women cannot afford this.

Naomi Kaihura, a special seat parliamentarian through CHADEMA says to get rid of discrimination in parliament, women should compete with men in the constituency.

She complains that special seat members of parliament are not receiving Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which to her amounts to discrimination. She says CHADEMA has a transparent system to appoint its special seat representatives hence there is no sexual harassment or corruption in the process.

Lightness Lwekiza, the Executive Director for the Institute of Tanzania Entrepreneurs (ASHATA), supports Kaihura's position by saying special seat representatives are representing a bigger constituency than their colleagues the more reason they should be given Constituency Development Fund as well. However Special seat parliamentarians are considered regional representatives and hence do not qualify for the constituency fund.

The Coordinator for the Tanzania Women Cross Party Forum (ULINGO), Dr. Ave Maria Semakafu believes the system to appoint women into special seats needs to be improved as it makes them relax and reduce their respect before society and even among their fellow members of parliament.



Women lag behind in top decision making positions

By Nuzulack Dausen

While the temperature for the general elections is on the rise, experts are scrutinizing women participation in the forthcoming general elections with a special eye by reflecting the history which has for a long time left women lagging behind in most decision making organs.

In the first multiparty elections in 1995 only 16 percent of parliamentarians were women. Out of 232 constituencies, women managed to win only eight seats. Those eight women were joined by 37 specials seats appointees to make a total of 45 women in the house of 269 parliamentarians.

However, with time, the average number of women leaders in the political parties, parliament and the cabinet is gradually increasing. This is due to policy, strategy and President Jakaya Kikwete's goodwill to empower women.

The number of women in the parliament has increased from 16 percent in 1995 to 36 percent by 2015. This follows affirmative action by the government to amend the constitution in 2005 to introduce a requirement of 30 percent women and a way of achieving this goal, special seats in the parliament.

Statistics by the Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, Sophia Simba while presenting the 2015 ministerial budget indicated that the number of women in the parliament has increased

from 62 women out of 288 parliamentarians in 2005 to 127 out of 357 in 2015.

Compared to neighboring countries Tanzania is second to Rwanda, which is the leading country in the world to have more than 50 percent women in the parliament.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organization uniting parliaments in the world, after the 2011 general elections Uganda now ranks third with 135 women out of 386 parliamentarians.

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Women and men in parliament



64%



36%





Women lag behind in top decision making positions

In contrast, to neighboring country Burundi, the number of parliamentary women went down after the 2010 general election. Before the election Burundi, with a total population of 10.5 million people, had 32 percent women in the parliament but after the elections the number went down to 31 percent.

The ongoing chaos in Burundi where President Pierre Nkurunziza is seeking the third term in office creates fear that such turbulent elections may cause the number of women to go down even further in the august house.

In Kenya the situation is discouraging as the number of women parliamentarians is only 19 percent, which is a slight increase compared to 10 percent before the March 2013 general elections.

Though the number of women parliamentarians is increasing, which generally is an encouraging sign, women activists think they should also hold top positions in the decision making organs. This is because in East Africa none of the women is a president, vice president or prime minister. Even for ministers none of the country has achieved the 50:50 gender ratio.

"The number of ministers has increased from six out of 25 ministers in 2005 to 10 out of 30 by 2015," said Minister Simba. This number is 33 percent of the cabinet. This equals the percent of Kenya which has 18 ministers where six of them are women under President Uhuru Kenyatta's regime.

Rwanda is still in the driving seat where the cabinet has 12 women out of 31 ministers constituting 39 percent of top decision making posts in the government.

On the part of parliament, Tanzania is leading with a woman Speaker, Anne Makinda. While the number of women in the cabinets is on the rise in the East African region, in various parliamentary committees the situation is discouraging.

The official parliament website of Tanzania indicates that out of 18 Permanent Standing Committees, only six committees are headed by women, while three others are deputizing

men. Translating this number means chair women accounts for 33 percent, while deputy chair women account for only 17 percent.

Whilst the number of women leaders in parliament and the cabinet is low, the situation is worse for political parties. Out of 22 permanent registered political parties, only one party ACT-Wazalendo is chaired by a woman. Even at ACT, the chairperson does not have the final say in the hierarchy, as the party leadership is headed by the Party Leader who is a man.

While Anna Mghwira is ironically heading ACT-Wazalendo, only five women hold Secretary General Position for minnow political parties namely, TLP, CHAUSITA, DP, Jahazi Asilia and ADC. While these parties are not among the big names, they are exemplary. ●

Special Seats divide Tanzanians

Dr. Semakafu says the process to appoint them is not transparent enough as it involves corruption and party requirements without regard to capability and professionalism.

Richard Mbunda, a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration supports Dr. Semakafu position by saying most women in special seats did not meet the public expectations, while singling out a few who have excelled like Halima Mdee, who ultimately won a constituency.

"Most of them underperformed by not contributing or moving private motions. It is without question that the system

to appoint special seats [parliamentarians] is defective as it cannot produce capable parliamentarians," says Mbunda.

Mbunda says even women ministers none of them has shown excellent record since the cabinet was formed politically to showcase that the number of women is high.

A similar thinking is expressed by Mwajuma Salum, a resident of Makumbusho area in Dar es Salaam who says "women contribution in the parliament was minimal compared to men."

Salum advises special seat parliamentarians to research and read extensively for effective contribution during the budget and other motions. ●

Media neglect aspirant women

By Shadrack Sagati



TAMWA trained journalists and editors before primaries in the political parties with expectation to improve coverage for women. Though there are some noticeable changes in the nature of coverage, journalists still need to give more space and airtime to women to facilitate proportional representation in this decision making organ.

While the number of women vying for the presidency increased this year after seven women picked nomination forms for the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the media seem to have turned a blind eye on them.

Amina Salum Ali, Dr. Mwele Malecela, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Monica Mbega, Ritta Ngowi, Veronica Kazimoto and Hellen Elinawinga have registered a new record for the elections through CCM ticket since independence. In 1995 there were 17 candidates for the presidency in CCM where only one candidate was a woman; Rose Lugendo and in 2005 there were 11 candidates where none of them was a woman.

On the side, the coalition of opposition parties (Ukawa) appointed the former Prime Minister, Edward Lowassa, who moved to opposition after CCM declared their presidential candidate, to be their flag bearer. Lowassa picked Juma Duni Haji to be his running mate. In order to be appointed, Haji moved from CUF where he was vice chairman to join Chadema. In another development, ACT-Wazalendo appointed Anna Mghwira to be their presidential candidate.

Before parties declared their presidential candidates and prior to Edward Lowassa's move to the opposition, the highest coverage was enjoyed by Edward Lowassa, Bernard Membe, January Makamba and Steven Wasira respectively.

Since the date they declared their intention to run for presidency these aspirants enjoyed extensive coverage from the date of picking presidential nomination forms and seeking sponsors in the regions, while other candidates received minimal coverage.

The total number of aspiring male candidates through the ruling party was 35 making a record 42 aspirants through CCM. The question is to what extent do the media cover women compared to men?

Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba, the Director for the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) says the media has not reported about women aspirants in the same way it does for male aspiring candidates.

"We heard and saw them on the date they picked the [nomination] forms, thereafter they are not heard anymore in the media," says Dr. Bisimba.

She says the media has not been fair to those women and this is an outcome of a long standing male chauvinism in the country where women are regarded as second class citizens, and they cannot hold such top positions. ▶▶ pg 24



Media neglect aspirant women

"If you look [on the days of picking nomination forms] male aspirants are shown with their wives there, and they continue to be heard where they are looking for sponsors, but I believe women who went to collect forms even their husbands are not known and not heard at all," says Dr. Bisimba.

She says the media needs to change and avail equal space and airtime for women and men candidates instead of segregating some because they are women. "The media is not yet late, reporters and editors I understand live in the male chauvinism, but they can rectify this," Dr. Bisimba says.

Ussu Malya, from the United Nations entity for women (UN Women) says she has not conducted a research about the coverage but women candidate stories are not heard so much.

Dr. Ayoub Rioba, a lecturer at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) says aspirant women were all covered on the day they picked the nomination forms but from then on they have not been widely covered.

"This is understandable because our media cover stories based on the prominence of individuals. Therefore, I should confess that the three (seven aspirant) women have not been covered regularly

like it is for Membe and Lowassa," says Dr. Rioba.

Dr. Rioba says Lowassa and Membe were extensively covered because they controlled factions within the ruling party, hence they were covered by all media outlets from the date they announced their intention to contest presidency to the date of nomination.

However, Dr. Rioba says, he was surprised by how the media ignored Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro when she collected the nomination forms because she did not get as much coverage as one would have expected.

"This surprised me a lot. How come they did not accord some coverage for Dr. Migiro while she has been the Deputy Secretary General for the United Nations, Foreign Minister and instead they said 'even she picks'?" queries Dr. Rioba.

He says it would be a surprise if such poor coverage is accorded to Dr. Malecela because she entered politics the first time and went for the presidency ticket.

He also had high expectations that Amina Salum Ali would have been covered extensively because she has held a post of Deputy Minister of Finance for the Union Government and a full Minister of Finance for the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, but has not been accorded a fair coverage for people to know her well.

Ndimara Tegambwage, a veteran journalist says women aspirants were covered when they collected the nomination forms but were not covered in the process of seeking sponsors.

"You know some candidates have a convoy of journalists, it is

possible women aspirants have no journalists that is why they are not heard," says Tegambwage.

Tegambwage laments the fact that journalists wait to be called to events instead of looking for aspirants to interview them and write feature articles that would help voters know them.

He says some men aspirants have big names and many followers therefore big names make big news compared to some women who are less known. He adds that aspiring women have no scandal or anything to write about them.

For Tegambwage women aspirants have to visit the media houses to be seen and heard.

He urges non governmental organizations to train journalists on the importance of giving equal coverage for men and women during the elections. He also urges editors to work without discrimination.

Betram Athony, a Kinondoni district resident says women are not getting fair coverage because most newsrooms are male dominated, where editors do not take women aspirants as serious contenders.

Richard Kazimoto, a computer analyst at the University of Dar es Salaam, says women are not covered because it is the belief in Tanzania that no woman can become a president.

"Even for CCM it will be hard to hand its flag to a woman for fear of the repercussion that Tanzanians may reject her and end up losing the elections. For similar reasons the media is not giving them coverage," says Kazimoto. ●





Senkoro: Govt should subsidize women candidates

By Agnes Temu

It is 54 years now since Tanzania attained her independence from the United Kingdom. The country resolved to fight poverty, illiteracy, disease and aimed to improve good governance which comes with freedom of expression, association and political affiliation.

The country also aimed at having equal opportunity for all citizens in every aspect, especially politics where elected leaders enter decision making organs which determine the destiny of the country.

The Presidency is the top civil servant post. However, ever since independence no woman has ever held this top civil service post.

Trials from women to vie for the presidency have been there through both the ruling and opposition parties but unfortunately none of them has ever won the presidency. When Anna Senkoro became the first woman to be nominated by her party and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) as the first woman presidential candidate in the country in 2005, yet she lost the elections. ► pg 26



As Tanzania prepares for her general elections, women and men being urged to contest is worth nothing according to Senkoro's experience.

"Men and women of this country all don't have confidence in women being in leadership. My fellow women were the first to discourage me. They thought I am not the right candidate and I had to lecture them about equal opportunity something that took a lot of my campaigning time," says Senkoro.

She complains about male chauvinism where in some regions of southern Tanzania it is believed to be a taboo and curse for a woman to stand in front of men and say anything.

"I got huge resistance in the southern regions. With deep rooted tradition and culture all favouring male I decided to stop my political campaign for some days and conduct seminars on gender equality. I started educating them about the value of a woman and the importance of having a woman as their leader.

"After a number of days lecturing them about the importance of gender equality, at last the elders consented my request to hold public meetings... I can't even begin to tell you how challenging it was," says Senkoro.

Even educated women were opposing her on claims that the time was not yet right for a woman to become president.

"I got the support from the Director for Radio One/ITV and the Guardian Limited, Joyce

Senkoro: Govt should subsidize women candidates



Mhaviile who accorded me the airtime. She gave me one hour in ITV every day for free... I thank Mhaviile very much," says Senkoro.

Resources were another set back. My party PPT-Maendeleo was not receiving subsidy from the government therefore the party had no money to support my campaign.

"My family supported me a lot. We used the little resource we had in our family... my husband tried all he could where we managed to campaign in a few regions,"

Oppression in the ruling party forced her to join the opposition."It is hard to become a leader in the ruling party. Women leaders are oppressing fellow women to maintain their posts,"

Senkoro says she resolved to contest the presidency in 2005 to save Tanzanians from

unnecessary poverty. "Life is so hard for most Tanzanians. The country has every resource needed to become rich but I wonder why we are poor. We have rivers, lakes, an ocean, a lot of natural resources and diamonds. We do not deserve to be poor," says Senkoro.

To illustrate that poverty can be eliminated in Tanzania, Senkoro has started working; "I have established two centers for children who are living in harsh conditions, one in Tanga and the other in Moshi. We can do the same throughout the country and give them technical skills for them to forge ahead,"

Asked whether she believes a woman can become president of Tanzania she says: "There are a lot of women capable of becoming President but have not come forward so far. Women like Sophia Simba and Anne Makinda are quality material for presidency."

For a woman to win the presidency the government should introduce a system of giving subsidy to all candidates aspiring for councillorship, parliamentarian and presidency.

I urge non-governmental organizations like the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) to step up gender equality education to the public and to expose them to debates from time to time as a way to build their confidence.

"I have returned to CCM and I am a permanent cadre. I have a duty to serve our society and in 10 years to come, I will contest the presidency once again." ●



SAMIA: Tanzania's possible first woman vice president



The CCM's running mate, Samia Suluhu Hassan, returns forms to seek candidacy of the vice chairperson of Constituent Assembly in Dodoma. On her left is TAMWA's former Executive Director, Valerie Msoka who was also a member of the Assembly.

By Deogratias Mushi

Tanzania is likely to have the first woman vice president in history, after the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) appointed Samia Suluhu Hassan the running mate of Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, their party flag bearer in the forthcoming elections.

CCM has listened to women rights activists who have been campaigning for the 50:50 representations in the top decision making organs – the argument being that if the electorates elect a man as president then the vice president or prime minister should be a woman or vice versa.

Valerie Msoka, the former Executive Director of Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) has been advocating

that this is the only way to elevate women to top decision making positions. "We say if the president is a man, then the prime minister or the vice president should be a woman. This is the only way to bring about equitable representation," said Msoka in June while training editors on gender sensitive reporting.

Samia was handed the running mate appointment on July 12th, this being the first appointment by Dr. Magufuli, on the if scenario. This means, if CCM wins the October 25th elections then for the first time in its history, Tanzania will be having a woman vice president.

Whilst women account for 51 percent of the total population, the country has never had a woman holding one of top three positions in the government "namely, president, vice president and premier.

Before 2000, Samia Suluhu Hassan was an activist with no interest in politics, and yet, 15 years down the line she has risen through the ranks to become the running mate of Dr. Magufuli, paving the way for more women to hold top decision making positions in the country.

This soft-spoken activist turned politician, is the current Minister of State in the Vice-President's Office, responsible for Union Affairs between the mainland and Zanzibar. It wasn't easy to shift from social activism to politics since according to her, many government officials and politicians have a pessimistic attitude towards activism, likening them to political opponents who criticize government.

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"Having worked as an activist at grassroots level and witnessing first-hand what people go through on a daily basis; I thought it was high time I joined politics and made changes in society," Ms Samia said in the interview in her office in Dodoma recently.

Samia says her nomination is a tough journey and was not given on golden plate. "People say nimeukata (I've made it) but the post I'm heading carries a lot of responsibilities and I have to be well prepared to make sure that I serve my nation with dedication and trust," she told her electorate at Makunduchi constituency in Zanzibar recently.

This running mate who showed her leadership skills as Vice Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly in Dodoma says for the prosperity of the country, she will try as much as she can to make bold decisions in favour of the country's development. Her major interests are women and children's development because she believes that once the two groups are empowered, the society attains drastic development.

SAMIA: Tanzania's possible first woman vice president



The prospective vice president is concerned with the fact that a section of the population struggles to access social services such as water, health and quality education and is irked that politicians are not doing enough to change the situation. She said she is looking forward to changing the situation – should CCM win.

She holds an MA from Southern New Hampshire open university in the USA; an Advanced Diploma in Public Administration from

the Institute of Development Management (IDM) now Mzumbe university and a Post Graduate Diploma in Economics from Manchester University in the United Kingdom.

She completed her O Levels in 1976 and started work in 1977 as a clerk in the Zanzibar Ministry of Planning and Development and after further studies became a Programme Officer with the World Food Programme (WFP). In 1999 she then took on the role of Executive Director for the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Zanzibar (ANGOZA) before being elected, on a special seat slot, as member of the Zanzibar's House of Representatives in July 2000 and later appointed by President Amani Abeid Karume as the Minister for Employment, Youth, Women and Children Development. In 2005 she again contested for Special Seats and won and was appointed as the Minister for Tourism, Trade and Investment which she served until 2010.

In 2010, Samia contested for a parliamentary seat in the National Assembly for Makunduchi Constituency in Unguja South through the CCM ticket which she won, succeeding Mr Abdisalaam Issa Khatib. She was then appointed Minister of State in Vice-President's Office (Union Affairs) by President Jakaya Kikwete and has occupied the position ever since.

Samia attributes her rise in politics to her candidness and firmness in making decisions and she is confident that a lot of women can make it in politics as well as in the social and economic fields as long as they are determined. ●

Whilst women account for 51 percent of the total population, the country has never had a woman holding one of top three positions in the government "namely, president, vice president and premier.



Children's agendas need to be given priority by candidates



Guess who is going to emerge the winner



Coordinator of Crisis Resolving Centre Gladness Munuo is receiving an award from the President of the United Republic of Tanzania in recognition of TAMWA's effort to bring gender equality and women empowerment at the climax of World Women's Day, March 8, 2015



Coming together is a good way of sharing experience about gender issues. Above is a group photo of women activists after one of their meetings

