

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Union and SADC Unveil Commemorative Statue of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere at 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union

The African Union together with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) unveiled a commemorative statue of the revered Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania during the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

The magnificent statue stands atop a granite base inscribed with Nyerere's impactful words from October 22, 1959: *"We would like to light a candle and put it on top of Mount Kilimanjaro which would shine beyond our borders giving hope where there was despair, love where there was hate and dignity where before there was only humiliation."*

Situated on the grounds of the building complex named in honour of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere hosting the African Union Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, the statue pays tribute to his pivotal role in Pan-Africanism and peacebuilding.

As the first Prime Minister of independent Tanganyika (1961) and subsequently the first President of the new state of Tanzania (1964) the effigy of the former Tanzanian leader and Pan-Africanist joined the distinguished ranks of monuments at the AU Headquarters. In 2012, the statue of Ghanaian Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah was unveiled, followed by the statue of Emperor Haile Selassie in 2019, recognizing their significant contributions of the OAU.

Aligned with the 2024 AU theme of Education, Mwalimu Nyerere's statue emphasizes his philosophy on education. He believed that education's primary purpose is to transmit accumulated wisdom and knowledge to people, resonating with principles such as self-reliance, critical consciousness, equality, social justice, and common good. Nyerere's innovative theory links education for liberation to the goal of building an egalitarian society based on Ujamaa.

The unveiling ceremony took place in the presence of H.E Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, President of Mauritania and AU Chairperson, SADC leaders including: H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of Tanzania, H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, H.E. João Lourenço, President of Angola, H.E. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of Zimbabwe, H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, H.E. Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius and H.E. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The event drew further distinction with the presence of leaders from Comoros, Ghana, Kenya and South Sudan, as well as the AUC Chairperson, Commissioners, Heads of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) along with high officials and representatives of the media. Among the esteemed guests were former President of Tanzania, H.E. Jakaya M. Kikwete, and former AU chairperson, H.E. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

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