

**BRIEFING REMARKS BY HON. ARCAO D. NTAGAZWA, (MP)  
MINISTER OF STATE - ENVIRONMENT, VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE AT  
THE SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING A REGULATORY  
REGIME AND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS FOR NATIONAL BIOSAFETY  
FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ANGLOPHONE AFRICA COUNTRIES,  
GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM,  
09-12 MARCH 2004.**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania,**

**Mr. John Hendra - UN Resident Representative and Coordinator of the UN System, Tanzania,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Mr. Charles Gbedemah-Regional Manager for Africa, UNEP-GEF, Biosafety,**

**Members of the Media,**

**Distinguished Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Your Excellency,**

We are delighted that you have found time to officiate the opening of our workshop this morning.

In front of you is a coming-together of more than 100 experts from more than 25 countries from the sub-region and others from outside Africa. Participants come from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Republic of South Africa, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia,

Eritrea, Ghana, Togo, Slovenia, Canada, United States of America, the United Kingdom and India.

**Your Excellency,**

This workshop has been sponsored by UNEP/GEF to provide a forum for sharing experiences among the Anglophone African Countries regarding the development of National Biosafety Frameworks for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol.

As you are aware the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity was finalized and adopted in Montreal in January 2000 and entered into force on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Tanzania acceded to the Protocol on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2003. The main objective of the Protocol is to ensure safe development, handling, transport, use, transfer and release of any GMOs into the environment while at the same time preventing risks to both the very environment and human health taking into account social-economic, cultural and ethical concerns.

**Your Excellency,**

Tanzania is one of the countries involved in the UNEP- GEF Biosafety Project in the development of National Biosafety Frameworks in order to meet the Cartagena Protocol obligations. Tanzania through Your Office with the support of UNEP-GEF in collaboration with stakeholders country-wide, launched a process for developing a National Biosafety Framework for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in September 2002. The process involves establishment of a system of legal, technical, and administrative mechanisms to address safety in the field of modern biotechnology. The development of our National Biosafety Framework (NBF) commenced with the formation of National Coordinating Committee that is comprised of members from relevant ministries and institutions. Members of the National Coordinating Committee are from Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.

**Your Excellency,**

To date, a country report on Biosafety and Biotechnology, draft regulations on Biosafety and draft Biosafety Guidelines have been prepared.

At this workshop, resource persons will provide a brief account of UNEP-GEF Biosafety Projects; they will present a synthesis of regional experiences based on country progress reports and they will describe national obligations and rights under the Cartagena Protocol. Participants will deliberate on key issues arising from these presentations and from case studies earmarked for this workshop.

I am confident that this sub-regional workshop will further enhance our understanding of the issues in the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol and improvement of the draft documents.

**Your Excellency,**

With these remarks, while thanking you once again for finding time to be with us this morning, it is now indeed my humble but pleasant duty to invite Your Excellency to deliver your key note address to this workshop. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania.