

Preamble

Participants of the International Seminar on Language, Tradition and Identity, which was held in Dar es Salaam April 1-3, 1992, and organized by the Institute of Kiswahili Research (University of Dar es Salaam), The Department of Asian and African Studies (University of Helsinki), and the Embassy of Finland in Dar es Salaam, and sponsored by FINNIDA and the Institute of Kiswahili Research, involving delegates from Finland, Hungary and Tanzania,

AWARE of the importance of language and oral traditions in defining the people's identity;

CONVINCED that recognition and acceptance of one's identity is the first step towards true independence and freedom;

CONCERNED that our governments and research institutions have not always given the questions of identity, language and tradition the emphasis they deserve;

DO hereby resolve and propose as follows:

1.0 LANGUAGE

- 1.1 That Language is the basis of a people's identity, and that for Tanzania Kiswahili is the embodiment of the national identity; hence the seminar strongly recommends that the government formulates a clear language policy which would give Kiswahili its rightful place in national development.
- 1.2 That Kiswahili should, therefore, be declared the medium of instruction in Tanzania's secondary and higher education as soon as possible.
- 1.3 That Tanzania's national identity derives from the various ethnic identities, hence it is important that the ethnic languages be recognized, documented and tapped for the benefit of the whole nation.

2.0 ORAL TRADITIONS

- 2.1 That there is need for more effort in documenting cultural and folklore data through field research for eventual analysis, archiving and dissemination. Moreover, efforts should be made to involve as many capable people as possible.
- 2.2 That oral literature is very important in creating a national literature, and a national identity, as exemplified by the Finnish national epos, the **Kalevala**. That the Finnish experience be used to inspire other countries to document and utilize creatively their rich oral heritage.
- 2.3 That the myths and worldviews of different peoples and ethnic groups should be investigated empirically and systematically through an intercultural comparative approach so as to enrich scholarship of oral traditions and enhance international understanding.

3.0 INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

- 3.1 That international cultural cooperation should be encouraged through training, cultural exchange programs, seminars and workshops, etc.
- 3.2 That in planning development projects, the cultural and interdisciplinary experts, and the local communities should be involved at all levels of planning, decision making and implementation.