Appreciation From HDIF Country Director

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity, on behalf of HDIF, COSTECH and UKAid, to give my heartfelt appreciation to all partners and innovation stakeholders for making Innovation Week 2020 a resounding success. For the 6th consecutive year, Innovation Week has grown and developed, including an increase in the number of events and the depth of content discussed.

Innovation Week events and exhibitions continue to be some of the most influential, educative and relevant platforms to share learnings and best practices on how to use technology and innovation for economic and social development. This year’s theme, “Innovate4Impact” has been evident in the content of events, exhibitions and discussions that have been conducted, with topics including partnerships, health financing, policy, innovation support, emerging technologies (blockchain), EdTech and more. We have constantly seen that when stakeholders come together, formidable partnerships can be formed and positively impact innovators and the innovation ecosystem.

Innovation Week 2020 spanned over two weeks starting with the Dar-es-salaam edition in the first week of March and the following in 5 other regions including Iringa, Arusha, Mbeya, Zanzibar and Dodoma. In Dodoma, apart from other IW2020 events coordinated by Capital Space, HDIF was also supporting the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in hosting the climax of the National Competition for Science, Technology and Innovation (MAKISATU).

We have seen over 5000 people participating from different economic and social backgrounds in the various events and exhibitions. The majority of participation was through the exciting exhibition that happened at Makumbusho Grounds as part of Innovation Week Dar es Salaam. We are very proud of the exhibition, which was larger than anything we have attempted previously.

We were very much pleased to see how our partners in regions swiftly responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by moving their events online. That’s the spirit we love to see from our partners, and that’s what innovation should be all about: responding and adjusting to any kind of situation, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. Thank you for your contribution and support to IW2020.

All this would not have been possible without the generous support from our sponsors. I would like to give a special recognition to this year’s sponsors Vodacom Tanzania, UNDP, UNICEF, UNCDF, UN WOMEN, Segal Family Foundation, Embassy of the Netherlands, Exim Bank Tanzania, Clouds Media Group and our organizing partners BUNI Hub, Seedspace, D-Lab, Segal Family Foundation, Swiss Embassy, and ESRF.

I would also like to thank the Government of Tanzania, specifically the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that has been supporting HDIF from the beginning through COSTECH, and the various local authorities in Iringa and other regions who directly took part in Innovation Week events, and to all those who personally participated in various events as panelists or keynote speakers.

Lastly, let me conclude by reiterating to everyone that COVID-19 is a big threat, and urge you to keep safe and continue observing the guidance and directives being provided by public health experts and the authorities.
UN WOMEN TANZANIA

UN Women was proud to participate in IF 2020 as a sponsor. The event invited UN Women to build a viable avenue to open doors for future engagements which, in turn, will allow us to recognize, promote and scale the innovation ecosystem in Tanzania.

The involvement of different actors from both the private and public sector demonstrated the importance of innovation, and we especially appreciated the increased support at UN Women.

We are thankful to HDF and its partners for its continued support of UN Women's innovation, management, and our key partners in the southern corridor. Justin A. Mekabulire.

MIBEYA EDITION

"Innovation week 2020 Mbaye edition allowed the Mboye University of Science and Technology (MUST) to meet with different private and public organizations, key stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem of the southern highlands. It sparked the right culture change for innovators, the community, and stakeholders who attended the event, and will have a multiplier effect on the region and the southern highland corridor. The most interesting takeaway for us was the impact of the interactions from innovators and key innovation stakeholders on what they expect the University should do to foster innovations and commercialization of technologies," said Justin A. Mekabulire.

"We are thankful to HDF and its partners for its continued support of MUST innovations, management, and our key partners in the southern corridor." Justin A. Mekabulire.

IRINGA EDITION

Considering the Corona Virus, the Mboye Innovation Week opted to hold an online event from 26th - 28th March, led by Kiota Hub, in collaboration with the Cube Innovation Space, for the benefit of all stakeholders who are unable to attend and interact with each other in person. The event included online webinars aimed at improving understanding for digital technologies and related services, and also provided a unique opportunity for individuals to participate in discussions on important topics such as digital literacy and the importance of technology in everyday life.

"That was the first time for all the participants to use the online conferencing platform. Our target is to reach a wider audience online on a daily basis, including speaking panels, focus groups, pitching competitions, live Q&A and interactive workshops." We were thrilled to receive positive feedback from participants. One of the highlights was a bus panel discussion with successful innovators from Mboye discussing successful challenges and their approach to life, family and business said Yusuf Sessanga the Team Leader for RLabs.

WEBCAST EDITION

In the event, the ICCT and the University of Dodoma were joined in collaboration with the Cube Innovation Space, to organise a webinar on the theme ‘Building a success Pipeline for Women Innovators’. The webinar, which was attended by over 100 participants, provided an opportunity for women innovators to share their experiences and challenges, as well as to learn from each other.

"We are proud to have been one of the sponsors of the 2020 Arusha. As Vodacom, we have seen and learnt that investment, supportive financial infrastructure and strategic partnerships among the private sector, government and academia are needed to propel the government in advancing the innovation ecosystem, which is crucial for growth and development across all sectors of this economy," said Hisham Hendi, Managing Director Vodacom Tanzania Public Limited Company (PLC)