

## Speech by Arch. Prof. Anyamba T J C, at the opening of the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Biennale on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

The Norwegian State Secretary Morten Hoglund, the Director of Architecture, the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Dr. Nina Berre, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure to stand at this pavilion to address you at the opening reception of the Nordic Exhibition.

First of all, the title of the exhibition “Forms of Freedom” is befitting to the East Africa of the 1960s and 70s. This was a period when all the East African Countries had just gained their independence. It was also the period when the new states were seeking for a new post-colonial national identity. Independence and national pride needed literally to be built from scratch. Africa was therefore inundated with foreign experts charged with constructing buildings signaling national identity.

Some of the results of this endeavor can be testified by the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC), designed by the Norwegian Architect Karl Henrik Nostvik. This building in the centre of Nairobi has since become a major landmark and an icon of the City of Nairobi and indeed Kenya.

During these founding years, some East African leaders embraced the post Second World War Nordic model of the welfare state. As a result, the collaboration between Tanzania and the Nordic countries, Kibaha Education Centre was built in 1970. The overall objective of the centre as originally conceived was to combat

three enemies of development namely; poverty, ignorance and diseases in an integrated way. In this regard, the centre provides community development services, educational and health services.

Similarly in the area of Education, the Kenya Science Teachers College is an example of collaboration between the governments of Sweden and Kenya. The college was established in 1966 to train Secondary School teachers in Science subjects. In the initial years, most teaching staff were Swedish.

More recently a physical example of Nordic collaboration with East Africa is the Jomo Kenyatta Sports Grounds in Kisumu. The grounds were rehabilitated by funding from Sweden and were the centre piece for Kisumu's 2001 centenary celebrations. In search for a regional identity, the planning of the grounds was based on the axial planning principles of the traditional Luo homestead. These grounds were also designed as an example of sustainable design through provision of sanitation, water harvesting, garbage management and promotion of small scale businesses. Like the KICC, the Jomo Kenyatta Sports Grounds have become a landmark and icon of Kisumu City.

Hon. State Secretary, it is perhaps in the area of education that the Nordic Countries have had a major impact on East Africa. The School of Architecture at the University of Nairobi was built by funding from Denmark. Most of the lecturers in the school from the 60s to mid 70s were Danes. In the late 70s and early 80s, Prof. Arne Nevanlinna was a visiting professor of architecture in Nairobi. He eventually established a Master of Architecture Programme at the Helsinki University of Technology in 1984. This programme trained many architects from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka.

Currently two Norwegian Universities AHO and NTNU are collaborating with five universities in East Africa i.e. University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Makerere University, Ardhi University and Addis Ababa University. They are training architects at both Masters Degree and PhD degree levels.

In conclusion, I would like to state that freedom will be found in the rapidly urbanizing cities of East Africa, which will form a basis for the exchange of ideas between the South and the North.

Thank you.