From personal secretary to medical doctor and president of Tanzania academy of sciences.

Du poste de secrétaire personnelle à celui de docteur en médecine et présidente de l'Academie des sciences de Tanzanie

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President of the Tanzanian Academy of sciences

Abstract: From village to the Presidency of the Academy of sciences, the arduous journey by a determined woman.

Résumé : Du village à la Présidence de l'académie des Sciences, le parcours ardu d'une femme déterminée.

My childhood

I was born on 12th December, 1940 in Mwika village, Moshi District, Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania to Eliaiho Ngoiya Lyimo and Daniel Lengaki Mariki. Both parents are deceased, my mother died in 1953 and my father in 1973 (May our All Mighty God rest their souls in eternal peace). I was a 5th born of 9 children, four females and five men. My parents were both peasants. My mother could not read or write but my father could read and write but was not educated. At the age of maybe 4 to 5 years, I was taken to live with my God father and his wife as they had requested. I lived with them as their daughter, but was mostly working as a helper or nanny to take care of their children and help in house chores. I woke up early in the morning and went to bed very late. I did a lot of manual work such as cooking for children and cleaning

dishes, cleaning the surroundings of the house and cleaning the cows sleeping place, the work I hated most.

Because I hated doing all this manual work, when my elder sister Dora was taken to school at the age of 8 years and myself 6 years, I requested my father to also take me to school. I knew if I went to school, I would not have to do all the manual work at home. My father agreed and both my sister and I were enrolled in standard one at Lyakirumu Primary School, Mwika, Moshi. At this time I was still living with my godfather but it was ok since he had no objection for my going to school. However, before going to school every day I had to wake up early in the morning and do all the chores at home after which I could go to school. The school was near home so I had no problem with that. I enjoyed going to school because it saved me from doing the manual work at home. The teacher Mr. Ernest was very good to me and very encouraging. I was very good in Arithmetic which was my best subject. My teacher was very pleased with me and as such he liked me a lot. He made sure I continued to do well in arithmetic and in other subjects too. Both my sister and I did well for four years at that school. Come fourth year at this school, it was time for Provincial standard IV examinations. Both my sister and I passed very well and were transferred to Ashira Girls Middle school which was in Marangu, Moshi.

My four years as Ashira Girls middle school

Ashira Girls middle school was a mission boarding school for girls. Only the best students from all over the Northern Province were selected to join Ashira middle school. My sister and I were therefore among the best brains from our primary school in Mwika, Moshi. This school was about 7 kilometres from our home; we stayed in boarding school and only could go home during weekends and during holidays. I was very pleased to be in a boarding school and no longer staying with my uncle and doing all the manual work which I hated. I vowed to study very hard so that I don't have to go back home again to do the manual work which I hated. We only used to go home some weekends to see my mother who was already sick. Whenever I went home during weekends, I went to visit my Godfather who had been quite supportive of my education. I knew he was supportive because whenever I went to see him he gave me some pocket money.

My mother is seriously sick

While in Ashira girl's school, our mother started getting very sick with some kind of an eye disease. The eye protruded outside, growing very big and discharging pus continuously. It was really frightening. It was humiliating to see her suffering. The disease was devastating for all of us and we just kept crying each time we were with her. My father took her to various hospitals in Moshi, Machame and Tanga for treatment but all in vain. She was operated several times without any improvement. The eye continued to grow and to ulcerate, deforming her faces completely. We saw her dying a slow death. She fought the disease with a lot of strength. Despite being so sick she would counsel us all the time. She told us to study hard so that we do not suffer when she dies. She was always very encouraging to us all. She always told me

to go to school and not to cry for her. She always said to me that I cannot live in the village because I was lazy and that only school will rescue me from this the manual work in the village. Throughout this period and at my age of 11 years, I could see the suffering in my mother and I knew she was not going to live. She suffered a lot. Besides she had two little children all the time with her, my brother Willy who was on the breast and Godfrey who was about 2 years. It was scary to look at her.

My mother dies in 1953

On one eventful day when I was already 12 years and in standard VI, one of our relatives came to our school to get permission for us to go home. This was unusual since it was a weekday, permission was granted and we went home only to find that our mother had died. I always remembered her last words to me. Study hard for education will be your saviour. You are lazy and cannot afford to live in the village, but if you study hard, education will save you from the manual work. Rumours went around that my mother was bewitched by a close relative who was our uncle's wife and a very close member of our family. I refuse to believe that statement. This was my turning point for my decision to study very hard to find out what disease had killed my mother. I had no idea about being a doctor, but I thought I would work very hard at school and read many books and when I grow up I will know the cause of my mother's death.

Responsibility for the younger children after mother's death

My mother died and left 9 children. The first two were males who lived in the village with our parents. Both of them had refused to go to school. They were young and not married yet. Our eldest sister Lipina was already in Tabora girl's secondary school in standard 9. My immediate elder sister Dora and I were both in Ashira girl's school in standard VI. The family decided that my younger sister Felista who was in Standard III should curtail her primary school classes to assume the role of a caretaker for the rest of the young children at home. Felista who was about 9 years did as decided by the family members. She stopped school and stayed home to take care of our three young brothers: Boniface 6, Godfrey 4 and Willie 2 year old. She stayed home under the supervision of our two elder brothers in the village. The family also decided that our elder sister Lipina who was already in Tabora Girls School standard 9 should continue with her schooling up to standard 10. She should then take a course to enable her to get a job. She went back to school, completed her standard 10. She passed well but for the above reasons she could not continue to Standard 11. She was posted to Dar es Salaam for an administrative and office management course which she completed successfully after one year. She was posted to work in Mbeya region. After she started working, she went home and took both Boniface and Willie to live with and educate them. At home life was tough. We all had very little to eat. We lived and ate from the dust bin. Our father was not very close to us and our grandmother was old and needed to be cared for. The family also decided that Dora and I should go back to school to proceed with studies at Ashira girl's school. After four years at this school it was time for Standard 8 Territorial Examination. My sister passed well with 2nd class and chose to go to teacher training college. After two years

of training she qualified and was a registered teacher. Immediately after she started working she went home and took the remaining children Felista and Godfrey to go to live with and educate them.

Esther goes to Tabora girl's school

Devastated with my mother's untimely death, I vowed to study and work very hard in order to find out about the truth of my mother's death. With this determination I got first class in my Standard 8 Territorial examination. This enabled me to move to standard 9 at Tabora Girls Secondary school in 1955. Tabora girl's secondary school was the best of all secondary schools in Tanzania during those days. Only the best brains from all over the country were enrolled in this school. I did well, but the competition was very high. So when I got to standard 12, equivalent of Form IV today, it was time for Standard 12 Cambridge examination. When the results came back, I did not pass well as I had gotten 3rd class. Therefore I was shuttered as I could not proceed to high school to find out why my mother died. I was very disappointed but did not stop there. It is also important to note here that our school system, during those days, did not encourage girls to study science subjects. These were reserved for men who were said to be more intelligent.

My training as personal secretary/office manager

After standard 12 and based on the subjects that I studied in O levels, I was posted to Dar es Salaam Technical College (today DIT) to study secretarial studies and office management. The programme included short-hand, typing, audio typing, book keeping and office management. I successfully completed the programme and immediately was posted to Mbeya Regional Office to work for the Provincial Medical Officer as his Personal Secretary.

My work as Personal Secretary

I reported to Mbeya regional hospital. My immediate boss was Mr. Masanja the chief clerk. My top boss was the Provincial Medical Officer Dr. Anderson, an English doctor. I took up employment in this office in early 1960, and within one year I had already resigned. Why? Because I could not stand being called all the time by a bell. Each time the boss wanted my attention he would call me by ringing a bell. I got so irritated. Mr. Masanja, my immediate boss, thought it was Ok and always counselled me to the same. Unfortunately I could not agree with him. This led to my sometimes refusing to respond to the bell by pretending not to hear it. I was warned verbally several times by the chief clerk. But I continued to resist responding to the bell. Later I received my first letter of warning. I knew this was serious and wanted to resign from this position. Before resigning I consulted with my sister who did not support my idea and besieged me to not resign. I did not agree with her so I finally submitted my letter of resignation and started looking for another job.

Esther got a job as ground hostess

After resigning from my position I kept looking up for something else. There was an advert from the East African airways for 6 positions of ground hostesses. I thought I was qualified for these positions and so I submitted my application. I was successful and was offered a job as a ground hostess in the East African Airways. We were six girls. The six of us became the first Tanzanians to be employed as stewardesses in the former East African Airways in 1961. We were flown to Nairobi for training on how to behave, dress, and walk and how to interact with passengers. I started working as a stewardess, and enjoyed the work. This was in 1961, the year of Tanzania's independence in December 1961.

At this time there were a lot of opportunities for studies. Many applications were advertised to Europe, Russia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and England, etc. to study various programs. For some reasons, and although I really enjoyed working as a stewardess, after seeing those applications, I decided to apply for them. I applied to go for further studies in any field. I think unconsciously I was not contented with my education so something was pushing me to go further. The countries offering the scholarship were open for only some kind of programs especially those of liberal arts and social sciences. There were no scholarships for engineering, medicine or other science programmes.

Esther gets scholarship to USSR

Because of my qualifications, I decided to apply to go to Soviet Union to study journalism and was accepted. In 1962, I was awarded a scholarship to study journalism in USSR. The first batch of 22 Tanzanians students myself included left for State University of Moscow, in USSR August, 1962. We were admitted for a one year pre-university program to learn the Russian language. I was shocked to note that more than 80% of the doctors in the USSR were women. With this observation, coupled with my desire to find out the cause of my mother's death, I requested the university administration to allow me to study medicine instead of journalism. I was not qualified to study medicine as I had not taken science subjects at a higher level. The university administration agreed to allow me change faculty on condition that I would go back to high secondary school to pursue science subjects for 2 years. I am sure the majority of other Tanzanians would not have accepted this condition but I did agree to it happily and was thus admitted into Russian secondary school in Moscow where I studied high school science subjects for two good years. I passed the necessary examinations with flying colours including the Russian language as an interpreter from Russian to English. In 1965 I was finally re-admitted into the M.D. programme which I pursued until 1969 when I graduated with an M.D. This was my second turning point. I wanted to become a medical doctor and I did.

This is the disease that killed my mother

Immediately I started the MD programme I had the task of searching what disease had killed my mother. I searched from the books in the library and talked to my lecturers by describing to them what I had observed in my mother when she was sick.

I spent a lot of time going to the library to read about different eye diseases. During the good old days there was no Internet and we only depended mostly on books. In the USSR there were not much publications and it was not possible to get them from western countries. So my search was limited to text books and reference books. I finally found out the disease that killed my mother. My mother died from Cancer of the Eye known as Retinoblastoma. At this point I was very happy to know that my mother was not bewitched but died from a natural disease, Cancer of the eye. I sent this message back home to all my relatives to inform them the true cause of my mother's death.

Esther marries Gibbons in 1967

In between my studies, I fell in love with Mr. Gibbons Mwaikambo who was also a student, undertaking an economic and planning programme in Moscow. Although we went together to Tabora schools (himself boys and myself girls), we did not know each other. We only met in the plane on our way to Moscow. Gradually we fell in love. He completed his studies and graduated with a degree in economics and planning and returned home in 1967. I travelled back to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania with him where we got married on the 31st of August, 1967. Two weeks after our marriage, I left him and travelled back to Moscow to complete my studies while he remained home to start work and establish himself. He got a job with government as an economist and a planner in the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

Esther graduates in 1969 with an M.D.

I completed my studies, and graduated with an MD in 1969, becoming the first Tanzanian female doctor. This was a celebration for me and my family as I had finally achieved my ambition. It is important to note here that everything is possible. It only needs determination, discipline and hard work. I am one person who never loses hope, nor despair easily. I am also very optimistic in life and I hate to lose. "If other people could do it, why not me?" That is my slogan. I always have to struggle to achieve my objectives. When I plan or trust in something, I want to see it done. So my biggest motto is hard work and optimism. I work very hard to win, but should I lose, I always accept losses and I never sit down and nag, or complain, I move forward. As you can see, my journey to becoming a medical doctor was not straight. I strongly believe that my optimism and hard work were some of the factors that contributed to my success.

My Internship at Muhimbili Medical Centre

As if that was not enough, immediately after my return I was posted to Muhimbili Medical Centre for my internship. Everyone was surprised at me. They had not seen a woman doctor, even the doctors themselves and nurses were a bit hesitant to address me as a doctor. Patients used to call me "mama nurse". They were always waiting for a doctor to come and see them because they were seen only by a nurse. So it was tough to convince them I was a doctor. This did not take much time. After a few months, I am accepted as a doctor and they love me especially the mothers. Always they are

asking for that women doctor to see their child. That was my consolation. I finished my internship after rotating in all required Departments, including: Surgery two months, Internal Medicine 2 months, Paediatrics 3 months, Obstetrics/Gynaecology 3 months, Psychiatry one month and Ear nose and throat one month.

My first Registrar (Medical Officer III) position

Internship takes one year and one has to rotate in all those departments as seen above. I completed my internship successfully. My first appointment in 1972 was in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Muhimbili Medical Centre. The position is known as Registrar (medical officer III). I was oriented and inducted very well into this discipline. I started working under supervision. My boss the late Dr. Tito Andrew (deceased), may God rest his soul in peace, taught me a lot. He made me love the subject. I learnt a lot from him and within six months I could attend patients, conduct deliveries, conduct C/S etc., the job was very heavy. I began work in the Labour ward from Friday to Monday non-stop, consulting, delivering, stitching episiotomies, rehabilitating women with PPH or APH with many blood transfusions and so many other challenges. Doctors were few, nurses were few, and it was just work, work and work. But as for me I enjoyed it. Dr. Andrew suggested and advised me to specialize in OB/GY, but I was scared. I refused. He recommended me for the same and begged me but I could not accept because it was too heavy a profession.

My experience in working in the children's ward

After working for one year in the Obstetrics/Gynaecology Department, it was time to rotate to another department to work under supervision. This time I was posted to the Department of Paediatrics and child health, where I worked under supervision of Prof Okeahialam. I worked in this department for 2 years and loved the discipline very much. There were a lot of challenges including inadequate human resources, inadequate facilities, poor infrastructure and many other challenges. The demand was high as we received many children with different health challenges including infectious diseases like tuberculosis, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles etc. Diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition and low birth weight were rampant. The under-five, infant and neonatal mortality was scarily high. It was a nonstarter but as for me, I love challenges, and therefore I immediately knew this is where I belong. I decided to settle in paediatrics. I wanted to contribute in improving children's health and in reducing their morbidity and mortality. I wanted to help in this area. This was my 3rd turning point.

In 1974/75 Esther joined the M. Med (Paediatric Programme)

I was determined to contribute in improvement of children's health, and reduce their morbidity and mortality. This was my driving force to apply for the M. Med Paediatric Programme at the University of Dar es Salaam. Five of us were selected to join the programme including Dr.Keto, Machera, Mbise, Msengi and myself. I was determined to become a paediatrician, and so I vowed to work hard to make sure I do well in my studies and pass well to become a paediatrician. Work was my number one priority.

So I really had to struggle hard to make sure I pass well. This was a three year programme. My training went on well and after three years it was time for final examinations. In order to qualify for the final examinations, one will have completed all the requirements including passing the continuous assessment tests (both practical and written) and have completed a dissertation. We sat for the final examination which I passed very well and was awarded a Master of Medicine M. Med (Paediatrics) degree in 1977 becoming the first Tanzanian female Paediatrician.

Position as faculty member (academic position)

Immediately after graduation as an M. Med Paediatrics, three of us applied for a teaching position. Both men were appointed lecturers in the faculty of Medicine but not me. I did not know why I was rejected, but later on I came to find out that it was because of my sex. All the academicians in the faculty of medicine exclusively were males. Hence I was intruding into men's arena. I did not despair but kept applying until after one year in 1978 when I was accepted and appointed lecturer in Paediatrics and child health in the faculty of medicine, University of Dar as Salaam. Once again, I became the first Tanzanian female lecturer in the faculty of medicine.

Publications

In terms of research from 1994 to date, I have been working in collaboration with two universities in US Prof. Donald Granger from University of Salt Lake and Prof. Brice Weinberg from University of Duke, and one research centre in Australia with Prof. Nick Anstey from Menzies School of Health research in Darwin, Australia. We work on the role of Nitric Oxide in Severe Malaria from 1994 to date. Together we have published hundreds of articles in peer reviewed journals.

Promotions

If appointment to an academic position was a challenge, promotion at that level was even more of a challenge. It always took me much longer time to rise from one position to the other when compared to my men colleagues. Nevertheless, I am one of those people who do not easily despair. I continued to work hard to have all necessary conditions in place for promotion, but sometimes it did not work. I had to send my papers outside the country for assessment and requested the assessors to respond to the dean, faculty of medicine. That way I managed to get my first promotion from lecturer in 1978 to senior lecturer in 1986 (8 years). I raised to the position of Associate professor in 1992 once again the first female medical professor. Despite the constraints and challenges of appointment and promotions, I enjoyed working as an academician. I like being busy. Working as an academician you are normally very busy with the three responsibilities: you are either teaching, doing research, or consulting patients and students. No time to think about odd things, or to worry or to misbehave. All the time you were busy with students, research or your patients. I have had a really fulfilling employment as an academician. Working with children is highly rewarding. My work has been highly rewarding to me and I should believe to others too.

Head of Department

In 1992 it was my turn to be appointed head of the Department of paediatrics and child health at the faculty of Medicine. After I was appointed, this did not please some members of the staff. They were not prepared to cooperate. Some of the lecturers threatened to resign from the department while others had sworn over their dead body, never to be led by a woman. Irrespective of all these challenges, I took up the position and everything went on well up to the end of my tenure in 1996.

Sabbatical Leave at Harvard University

In 1994 I was a recipient of a Carnegie fellowship on Health and behaviour/anthropology. I spent 1 year at the Department of social medicine, Harvard University, where I worked with professor Maryjo on social medicine and culture. We did research together and published several papers. In 1995, I completed my fellowship and returned to Tanzania.

Formation of Tanzania Academy of Sciences in 1994

In 1994 Professors of universities, myself included, assembled and agreed to establish TAAS. This was driven by Prof. Peter Msolla who was the Secretary General. Election of officers included myself, one of the founders, who was elected the vice president of the academy, the position I held from 1994 to 2012 when I was appointed President of this academy. My tenure as president of the Academy was from July 2012 to September 2018. (Two terms of three years each).

As president of the academy I got a high international exposure. Our academy is a member of Network of African Academies of Sciences NASAC. Our academy is also affiliated to the Inter Academy Panel and Inter Academy Medical Panel. The academy also collaborates with other world academies of sciences. As president of TAAS I have had the opportunity of attending many international science meetings including meetings of: Inter Academy Panel and Inter academy medical panel, Royal Society of the UK, National Science Academies of the US, commonwealth science conference meetings and many others. Other meetings attended are the annual NASAC and AMASA meetings. Last year, the Tanzania academy of sciences hosted an international conference on Women and sustainable development Goals in Africa. All these meetings and conferences have promoted and strengthened me in sciences matters.

My tenure as Vice Chancellor of HKMU

In 1997 I left MUHAS and joined Hubert Kairuki Memorial University as Deputy Vice Chancellor for academic affairs. In 1999, I was appointed the Vice Chancellor of HKMU after the death of its founder and first V.C. This position gained me a lot of exposure and I met and worked with many institutions of higher learning. I worked and interacted with diverse group of academicians. I had the opportunity of being appointed to many boards and university councils. For example in the year 2000, I was appointed one of the 8 members of the committee of Higher Education Accreditation council (HEAC) for several years until it was replaced by the Tanzania

Commission for Universities. In the same year 2002 I was appointed chairperson of the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA), the position I held for 4 years until July 2006.

Esther's engagement with institutions of higher education

I have been a member of Mzumbe university council, Sokoine University council, a member of University of Dar es Salaam Senate, Mzumbe University Senate etc. I am a chairperson of Tumaini University Council and many other higher education institutions. I have been a member of the Commission for Science and Technology for three terms of 9 years. I have besides attended many scientific meeting and interacted with many international fellows of various academies. So that I feel I have a considerable exposure in this aspect of science.

My wishes now are to see a change of attitudes of doctors to become true medical professionals and to adhere and respect the Hippocratic Oath which we all made during graduation. Doctors should live their profession. They should respect their profession (this is my main wish).

Changes in life

Having been in the medical field for half a century (from 1969), I have seen a number of changes in my life time. I have seen substantial changes in the disease pattern. Most of the childhood infectious diseases have decreased substantially after introduction of maternal and child health services in 1974 and the Expanded programme of Immunization 1975. Some diseases like Polio have been eliminated while other diseases like tetanus and diphtheria are on the decrease. Under-five and Infant mortality have substantially decreased while neonatal mortality is also on the progress to a decrease.

What I am proud of

I am very proud to be a medical doctor and to be a role model for females to become doctors and help women and children in terms of disease prevention and treatment. Women suffer a lot from all kinds of diseases, poverty and ignorance. As a female medical doctor, together with other female colleagues, we have developed and are running breast cancer campaigns since 1987 creating awareness and sensitizing women to take care of their health, to screen for breast cancer and cervical cancer. We have started using the HPV virus to prevent cervical cancer. I am very proud of this. This was only possible because as a medical doctor I founded the Medical women association of Tanzania through which this programme is implemented. We have reached millions of women through this programme. Without being a doctor, I could not have done that.

My achievements

In 1969 I became the first Tanzanian female medical doctor, but today there are equal opportunities for boys and girls of becoming doctors and the same with all other science programmes. My pride is to have been a trailblazer in sciences for women.

I am known as a woman of many firsts including: First female doctor, first female professor of medicine, first female vice chancellor first female president of Tanzania Academy of Sciences, etc. I have chaired and am still chairing several university councils, boards, committees and am a member of many organizations etc., etc.

Most difficult decision made

The most difficult decision that I have made in life is that of deciding to go to USSR at the age of 19 years, despite all the encouragements from my family, colleagues and friends. This was a major decision on my part. Once I decided I did it. The other decision was to go back to secondary school in USSR to do sciences so that I could join the medical program. That was tough, but I did it. I wanted to be a doctor and if that was the only way, I had to go for it. The other decision is that of embarking on M.D. program which had never been done by a Tanzanian woman, as young as I had been with no role model and no encouragement from any one, I did it. I am glad I did for now females in Tanzania are following in my footsteps. It was also a tough decision to take up some of the positions which have always been held by men.

Throughout my working as a medical doctor and professor of Paediatrics and Child health I have held many positions (formal and informal) formerly only held by men. Here are some of them:

- President of Tanzanian Public Health Association (TPHA) 1999-2006
- Vice Chancellor of Hubert Kairuki memorial University (HKMU) 1999-2006
- Chairperson of Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) 2000 – 202012
- Chairperson of National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA)
- President of Tanzania Academy of Sciences (TAAS) 2012-2018
- Chairperson Tumaini University-Makumira (TUMA)

What has yet to be achieved?

I am currently working on trying to achieve the goal of re-inducing a professional ethics culture in the minds of our doctors and nurses. I want to see that medical professionals adhere to medical ethics. About my life as of now, I am quite happy and satisfied that I have done what I mostly wanted to do. I have done my part. I believe that I have some contributions in the medical field. I have been a trailblazer for other young women of this country. It was important to show by practice that it can be done and to remove the myth in the minds of females that STEM is hard, it is for men and is not for females. On the contrary I would say it is easier for it does not need too much reading, rather understanding. I believe that social sciences, law and history are more difficult for there is a lot of reading.

When people look back at your life, how do you want to be remembered? I wish to be remembered as a very humble but highly courageous hard working woman. A woman

of strength. A woman who does not get discouraged easily, a woman of principle as I stand for what I believe. I would venture into any area where most women consider impossible to venture. For example, when my name was mentioned as a candidate for the position of president TAAS, both men and women were unhappy about it. Some struggled to have me withdraw, but I persisted until the voting stage when I found myself winning the position. But believe me, many people until today have been uncomfortable about my being president of all sciences in this country. I have made it possible for women to believe that nothing is impossible for a woman. At my home in Moshi, my own late brother Odom and his late wife Eline Mangowi always called me a woman who can change a pig into human being. They always thought of me a woman who made every impossible possible. Don't ask me why but that is the way they thought.

Awards

During my working period as a medical doctor and professor of Paediatrics, I have received several awards and recognitions:

- In 2008, I was invited by the Ministry of Education, Uganda to give the Sarah Ntiro Lecturer and Award
- In October, 2009 I was invited by Harvard university, Boston to receive the "Harvard Distinguished African lecturer award"
- In December 2009 – I was a recipient of the "Women Achievement award in Health"
- In February 2013 I was the recipient of the "Martin Luther King Jr Drum Major for Justice Award" presented here in Dar es Salaam by the American Ambassador to Tanzania
- In April, 2013 I was the recipient of the "Best African health Research Scientist Award" given by Ministry of Health through National Institute for Medical Research.
- In September, 2017, I was recognized as the "First Tanzania woman doctor" a trail blazer for women in Science. Award was issued by Tanzania Gender and networking Programme and handed to me by Mama Samia Suluhu, Vice President of Tanzania.
- In April, 2018 I received an award by Clouds FM as recognition of being a Woman of strength
- In 2018 I was elected an International member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS)