



# FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE Speech

## Ambassador Alfonso E. Lenhardt's Remarks at Peace Corps Swearing-In Ceremony on Wednesday, August 15, 2012

Hamjambo! Habari za asubuhi?

Guest of honor representing the President's Office of Public Service Management,  
Permanent Secretary  
Mr. George Yambesi,

Representatives from the Ministry of Education,  
Other government officials,  
Distinguished guests,  
Service Organization Representatives,  
Peace Corps Country Director for Tanzania, Elizabeth O'Malley,  
Peace Corps staff, current and returned Volunteers,

Trainees,

*Waheshimiwa mabibi na mabwana,*

All protocols observed,

Each time I have had the privilege of presiding over the Swearing-In ceremony for new Peace Corps Volunteers I feel a tremendous sense of pride, both as an Ambassador and as an American.

These trainees are among the best our country has to offer in terms of commitment, intellect, and energy. I have been inspired during my travels throughout Tanzania each time I meet Peace Corps Volunteers, and see firsthand their service to so many communities.

Peace Corps volunteers are American envoys of goodwill and friendship. They serve as emissaries who promote cross-cultural understanding while they provide much needed skills and training. But they do much more than that. They live with Tanzanians, learn their customs, speak Kiswahili, volunteer to harvest the land alongside farmers, and share meals with families. And to these families, I say *thank you* for welcoming America's sons and daughters into your homes and communities.

The Peace Corps demonstrates the United States' priority to serve the people of Tanzania, a commitment that began in 1960, just a few years before I began my own public service career. It was then that President John F. Kennedy founded the Peace Corps. Although I chose a path of service in the military, I always felt pride for those Americans who responded to President Kennedy's call to service in the Peace Corps - they are true pioneers and unequalled humanitarians.

During his presidential campaign in 1960, President Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to find a meaningful way to contribute to their world. His famous speech inspired the students, and shortly after taking office, President Kennedy signed an executive order to form the Peace Corps. Volunteers were eager to sign up for assignments in Tanzania, Ghana, the Philippines, Chile and St. Lucia.

Approximately 5,000 individuals seized that first opportunity, and over 200,000 have served across the world in the past 50 years. President Nyerere was the very first world leader to officially request Peace Corps Volunteers, thus beginning the legacy we are here to witness today.

With this group of Education Volunteers, the Peace Corps is in its 41st year of service in Tanzania in the education, health, and environmental sectors.

As our newest Volunteers in Tanzania, you will discover that the simple designation “Education Volunteer” is not enough. Since 2005, the Peace Corps has also been part of the U.S. Government’s combined effort to support Tanzania in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. is the single largest contributor in this struggle and our Peace Corps Volunteers play a major and important role in this effort. Likewise, malaria is endemic in Tanzania and you will serve in collaboration with the President’s Malaria Initiative to *Stomp Out Malaria* in Tanzania.

Your service will make a positive impact in your village and communities and to the larger U.S.-Tanzania bilateral relationship. Relations between our two nations are dynamic and based on mutual respect. With a shared commitment to common interests such as economic development, education, environmental conservation, and the fight against poverty and disease, and our ties continue to strengthen.

This morning, I would especially like to recognize the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, which works in close collaboration with the Peace Corps and our volunteers. We walk hand in hand with you to address the challenge of educating young Tanzanians who will become the leaders of the future, and the teachers who will guide them there. I thank you for your contribution to our partnership here in Tanzania.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 47 Trainees who are about to be sworn-in as Volunteers have chosen to dedicate two years of their lives to serve the people of Tanzania, and to promote friendship between our two nations. They have worked very hard over the last nine weeks to meet strict linguistic and technical requirements needed to become Volunteers in Tanzania.

I would like to thank the language facilitators, technical trainers, Peace Corps Staff, Tanzanian model schools and host families of the Morogoro district for their patience and dedication to the task of preparing these Trainees for their service.

In their absence, I would like also to thank the parents, families, friends, teachers, and guides who inspired in these Trainees a thirst for international service and love for all humanity.

Future Volunteers: during your time in Tanzania, all of you will share the richness and diversity of America with new friends in your host communities.

You may be the first American they have met and will be the face of America to many people. As I know well, it is an honor, an opportunity and a responsibility, to represent the United States and the American people. With your service, you do us all proud.

And, your job will not end in two years time. Each of the places in which you and your fellow Volunteers serve will undoubtedly come to occupy a special place in your hearts, and you will bring back to America, stories, recollections, understanding and a lifelong connection to these communities -- you will also bring back to your American communities a piece of Tanzanian culture, becoming also de facto “ambassadors” for Tanzania all over the United States.

Today, some 8,000 volunteers are serving beside you in some 75 countries throughout the world. Over 2,000 volunteers have served before you here in Tanzania. Among those former Tanzania A Peace Corps volunteer is Johnnie Carson, our top American diplomat for Africa.

Since 1961, more than 200,000 Volunteers have served in 138 countries. Some of those volunteers are amongst us today. I ask that they stand for a moment so that they may be recognized. These volunteers are passing to you a legacy of service. When you take the oath today, think of them and the heritage they pass on to you. Please be seated.

Now, to the business at hand.

Trainees, please stand.

You have travelled a long road to arrive at this point. You have wisely used your training period, and are ready to commit to two years of service in Tanzania and to uphold the three goals of the Peace Corps:

- To provide technical assistance to the people of Tanzania;
- To contribute to a better understanding of Americans on the part of Tanzanians;  
and
- To contribute to a better understanding of Tanzanians by fellow Americans.

Please raise your right hands and repeat after me.

(Oath)

I, (state your name), solemnly pledge my two year commitment and support to the peoples of Tanzania;

and in the spirit of peace, friendship, and international cooperation, that I will do my best to fairly represent my country while respecting the traditions, culture, and values of Tanzania; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully carry out my duties as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Well done new Volunteers!

I am confident you will have an unforgettable experience in Tanzania, and I wish you the best of luck.

Hongera Sana!

Asanteni sana!