

Statement at the Memorial Service for Mr. Kanyama Chiume
(November 22, 1929 – November 21, 2007)
Flynn Memorial Home,
1652 Central Park Avenue, Yonkers, New York
Saturday, November 24, 2007

I stand here on behalf of the Tanzania Government, the Tanzania Community in New York and all Tanzanian nationals who knew the late Kanyama Chiume and remain close to his family. We extend deep condolences to the bereaved family, friends and colleagues of the late Kanyama Chiume whose body lies before us in dignified peace at this solemn service.

On behalf of the family, I thank all of you who have assembled at this chapel to pay our last respects to this great son and patriot of Malawi and Africa.

Kanyama Chiume was one of the towering stalwarts of Pan-Africanism and the Nyasaland nationalist movement which led to the independence of Malawi. His passing away marks the end of the era of the founding fathers of African independence and unity.

My generation, who were youngsters at the dawn of independence in Africa, witnessed the thrill and jubilation of the lowering of the British Union Jack in former British colonies and the hoisting of the flags of our independent states. However, at that age we did not fully appreciate until much later the courage and sacrifices which were made by the leaders who started the fight for our independence against tremendous odds, risks and personal sacrifices.

As a student in secondary school, I heard Mwalimu Julius Nyerere speak on the radio after our independence in 1961, telling Tanzanians that our independence in Tanganyika, and later Zanzibar, was not complete until the whole of Africa was free and that Africa must unite. He would mention names like Chipembere, Chiume and Chirwa in Nyasaland, Kenyatta in Kenya, Obote in Uganda, Kaunda in Northern Rhodesia, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Nkomo in Southern Rhodesia in our region and other legends of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism.

The name of Chiume became more prominent in newspaper headlines in Tanzania as Malawi approached its independence. Mr. Chiume soon crossed over to Tanzania as a political exile after the Cabinet crisis in Malawi of 1964. Crossing to Tanzania was, for Mr. Chiume, a homecoming and he became a household name. Tanzania was actually his second home where he had spent a good part of his youth as a student. He attended schools like the Uhuru Primary School in Dar es Salaam with our veteran elder statesman, Rashid Kawawa, a former Prime Minister soon after independence and later Vice President. He later attended secondary school in Tabora with some of the prominent future Cabinet Ministers and Party Leaders of Tanzania such as Job Lusinde And John Malecela. Later he taught at Dodoma Alliance Secondary School.

The time he spent in Tanzania were probably the political formative years for Chiume and his Tanzanian colleagues. He became close to the Late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, father of the Tanzanian nation at that time. Chiume became an early Pan-Africanist as he saw the destiny of the people of Tanganyika and Nyasaland as one and the same. He is known to have

been one of the early sympathizers and financial contributors to the Tanganyika African Union, the Party which won independence for Tanganyika.

To the generation that followed after independence, to which most of you here belong, I should remind you not to take the independence of our countries in Africa for granted. The struggle for independence from colonial rule needed a leadership of courage, dedication and sacrifice to mobilize a mass following that created a resistible force to defeat foreign domination. We must remain eternally grateful to them and be always ready to defend our hard-won independence.

Kanyama Chiume was among those leaders who decided to stand up and fight. Some of the leaders fell fighting; others were imprisoned for long periods. Those who survived, like the late Chiume, and brought independence, never stopped fighting for true freedom and justice even after independence. He went on to reject the replacement of white domination by black dictatorships. Chiume, like many others like him, were the precursors of the second wind of change in Africa that is blowing now to bring democracy and socio-economic transformation to the ordinary people of our countries and our Continent.

Kanyama Chiume was also a great Pan Africanist. He denounced apartheid and continued to support the struggle against the remaining colonial regimes in Southern Africa. His Pan-Africanism found full expression at the Second Summit of the Organization of African Unity in Cairo where he used that platform to register his fundamental disagreement with the domestic and

foreign policies of the first Prime Minister of Malawi Hastings Banda. Upon returning to Malawi, the die was cast and the two parted ways in what came to be known as the “Cabinet Crisis of 1964”!

Kanyama Chiume came to Tanzania to rebuild his life and continue to fight for full liberation and unity of Africa.

As we pay our last respects, let us also remember him for paving the way to the warm and fraternal relations between the people of Malawi and Tanzania and our two governments. His family, which he leaves behind, will remain the enduring symbol of that fraternity.

May his soul rest in peace.