



The Agenda for the Tanzanian Man in the Year 2025

Although there is an International Men's Day, we, Tanzanian men, will celebrate the Tanzanian Men's Day for the second time on April 23, 2025. Tanzanian Men's Day is commemorated every year on April 23, just a few days before the celebration of Tanzania's Union Day on April 26. The United Republic of Tanzania was formed on April 26, 1964. Tanzanian Men's Day is different from International Men's Day, and there are fundamental reasons for celebrating it on a different date. Briefly, the founder of International Men's Day was Dr. Jerome Teelucksingh from Trinidad and Tobago, who formalized the celebration on November 19, 1999. On that day, the scholar linked the event to his father's birthday. Therefore, we Tanzanian men see no reason to celebrate Dr. Teelucksingh's father's birthday; instead, we found it fitting to hold our celebration a few days before commemorating the birth of the Tanzanian nation on April 26, 1964. That is the fundamental reason for celebrating Tanzanian Men's Day shortly before Tanzania's national birthday festivities.

Secondly, Tanzania has earned fame as an island of peace that values the shields of wisdom, unity, and peace, as expressed in the national anthem. We celebrate the Tanzanian man because he is a Tanzanian who values his identity. He is not swayed by foreign cultures and traditions. He takes pride in being Tanzanian and fights to protect the role and dignity of the Tanzanian man at the family, community, and national levels.

In this context, many relationships among Tanzanians today face various challenges, including social changes and shifting gender perspectives. Women have been encouraged to take independent roles and compete in different social spheres, which can affect traditional expectations in relationships. On the other hand, some men worry about life challenges that may arise in their relationships, especially when mutual understanding and respect are not fully achieved. Marriage and relationships in general require cooperation, understanding, and commitment from both parties to achieve lasting happiness. Challenges often stem from mismatched expectations, where relationships are seen as financial obligations rather than genuine partnerships. Those in relationships must work together to build a foundation of mutual respect and shared responsibilities. The goal of such relationships should be to strengthen communication, cooperation, and respect to ensure happiness and stability in life. Through shared commitment and understanding, these challenges can be addressed effectively.

Tanzanians must build a society where husbands, wives, and children live with wisdom, unity, and peace. This is not easy, as it requires investment in all areas, especially in strengthening

relationships between men and women. Current circumstances indicate challenges in relationships. It is believed that there is an increase in the number of men abandoned by their families. There are challenges related to patriarchy, which benefits some women and men. There are women and men who are victims of gender-based violence. Some men become strangers in the families they built with their sweat and blood. These men find themselves in situations where their partners influence their children to turn against them, leaving them alone in old age. Likewise, there are women who suffer abuse from their partners or their partners' relatives. It is undeniable that victims exist on both sides.

Although women's challenges are often spoken about, men's challenges are not sufficiently addressed. Many projects focus on empowering women, assuming that all men are capable. Some Tanzanian men lack personal savings to support themselves in old age and thus find themselves in dire situations after being abandoned by their families. Many retired elders end up seeking new jobs to sustain themselves. For example, the organization SHIWACHANDO (Organization of Men Facing Challenges in Marriage) has found that many conflicts in relationships involve economically empowered women who belittle their husbands and deny them certain rights.

Just as women began campaigns to demand their rights, it is appropriate for Tanzanian men to initiate campaigns aimed at strengthening relationships between men and women at all levels. Child upbringing requires the presence of both father and mother. When one parent is absent, it becomes a problem. Although globalization and technological advancement have enabled women to perform tasks traditionally done by men, these changes are insufficient to support women in child-rearing. Current trends indicate that globalization and technology have failed to assist in raising children of both genders. Instead, they have brought greater challenges. The situation is worse in environments where child-rearing is done by a single parent due to globalization-related challenges.

Men who have abandoned their roles as men, either deliberately or due to relationship challenges, have caused a heavy burden of child-rearing to fall on women. There are clear signs that this burden has become too heavy to bear. For example, it has become common for relationships to break down for trivial reasons. Conflicting language arises as jokes, where peace leaves through the bedroom window, hides under the bed, then crawls into the children's rooms, settling under the sofa, behind the television, or beneath the coffee table—chaos everywhere.

Men must not remain silent, because it is undeniable that globalization and technology have brought greater challenges to relationships. Men's silence creates mental health challenges. Mental health issues affect the performance of both men and women, leading to reduced productivity for families, communities, and the nation at large. Furthermore, poor mental health can lead to mental illnesses. Mental illnesses are like other diseases; if untreated, they can worsen, including causing death among those affected.

There are questions to ask here: Can today's men protect women at all costs, from the family level to the community and the nation, as was the case in traditional Tanzanian society? Why do some women suffer due to lack of employment, pregnancy, and even breastfeeding? Why do

boys and girls, who cannot do anything about it, continue to witness hatred, lack of peace, and hunger?

Relationships, including marriage, require maturity in environments where men and women value those relationships. If men and women do not value their relationships, challenges will arise that are difficult to resolve. In any environment, men and women in relationships are obliged to protect those relationships and everything that comes from them, including their children. If challenges lead them to start other relationships (commonly known as extramarital affairs), whether deliberately or due to difficulties, they must take responsibility in all areas to reduce the pain for victims, especially the children born of those relationships. Responsibility is not only about providing money but also about creating proper environments for child-rearing. It should never be tolerated to have street children, as this is not part of Tanzanian culture and tradition. The presence of street children could lead to a national disaster in the future.

In conclusion, efforts to improve gender relations require genuine cooperation among various stakeholders, including the government and others. Many congratulations to the government and all stakeholders for creating enabling environments that have made it possible to celebrate Tanzanian Men's Day twice in a row. Special congratulations also go to SHIWACHANDO (Organization of Men Facing Challenges in Marriage) for continuing to speak for men facing marital challenges and for their initiative to establish a men's clinic. We also commend them for introducing a system of awarding couples, with the aim of learning from those who live with love, resilience, happiness, and shared goals. This system also aims to eliminate negative perceptions among youth who increasingly dislike marriage, while reducing the number of single mothers and single fathers.