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 **PRESS RELEASE**

**MINISTER MAHIGA SPEAKS ABOUT FIVE DECADE-LONG THRIVING RELATIONS BETWEEN TANZANIA AND NORWAY**

 Tanzania Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Augustine Mahiga has told his Norwegian counterpart Hon. Ine Eriksen Soreide today that the strength behind flourishing Tanzania-Norway bilateral relations has been the distinctive cooperation and strategic assistance that exist for over five decades now between these two traditional partners. The two leaders held talks at the Government Guest House to kick start the first-ever political and diplomatic consultations meeting aimed at strengthening their relations.

 Minister Mahiga who is in Oslo for a three-day working visit told the Norwegian delegation that besides diplomatic relations that Tanzania enjoys, the Norwegian government has been in the forefront in providing substantial amount of development assistance to Tanzania with a plus, throughout all the leadership phases in the country.

 “Our bilateral relations with you, our friends, date back before the independence of Tanganyika whereby Norwegian teachers, doctors, nurses and engineers, came to the country to provide social services to the people of Tanzania particularly in rural areas” Hon. Mahiga said. This is a testimony that the two countries have long-standing relations, adding that “shortly after independence in 1960’s and 1970’s the Norwegian and Tanzanian governments participated in joint Nordic Projects like the Kibaha Education Centre and the Uyole Agricultural Research Centre, in line with policies and principles of an independent Tanganyika. This demonstrates that Norwegian cooperation is strategically aligned with our country’s vision” Minister Mahiga complemented.

 Responding to this, Hon. Ine Eriksen Soreide said that her government has over the years enjoyed the relations with Tanzania and as a Foreign Minister; she will strive to continue this trend. Norwegian government has selected Tanzania to be among its recipients of development assistance and her duty is to make sure that this is implemented swiftly.

 “Norway and Tanzania see eye to eye in many global issues of concern such as global peace, improving multilateral trading system, international order as well as world efforts in prevention of conflicts. In all this we view Tanzania as a key and credible player in the African region and our partner in development” Hon. Soreide emphasized. She added that she looks forward to continue with the commenced political consultations annually, for mutual benefits in those issues. Hon. Mahiga assured Minister Soreide that Tanzania will reciprocate hosting the consultations next year, which will be held in Dodoma, the capital city of Tanzania.

 Under the political and diplomatic consultations framework, Hon. Mahiga and his delegation also held talks with the Norwegian Development Minister Hon. Nikolai Astrup at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In their consultations, Minister Mahiga reiterated Norwegian strategic assistance for development to Tanzania which is key for economic growth and alleviation of poverty.

 “Given the historical ties between us, your government has always provided support to projects that are much beneficial in rural areas example rural electrification. Norway’s support to energy sector is key given the role of the sector in supporting our economic growth”, said Amb. Mahiga.

 Other areas in Tanzania that receive Norwegian assistance are; management of public recourses as well as tax collection. The Government of Norway through the assistance programs of Oil for Development and Tax for Development contribute to build capacity of Tanzania’s institutions responsible management of resources, management of public revenues and environment protection.

 The maiden Political and Diplomatic Consultations comes as a result of the MoU signed in 2017 in Dar es Salaam between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania and Norway, which enable the two ministries to discuss issues of mutual concern in order to enhance further bilateral ties. Next round of consultations of this nature are envisaged to take place next year in Dodoma, Tanzania.

**ENDS**

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