

# 'Africans owe their lives to indigenous knowledge'

PRESIDENT Benjamin Mkapa has said indigenous knowledge (IK) has all along



**PRESIDENT Mkapa**

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By MBONEKOMUNYAGA

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been, and continues to be, the primary factor in the survival and welfare of the majority of Africans.

Launching a book entitled: *Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development* in Dar es Salaam yesterday President Mkapa said he had first-hand experience of the benefits of indigenous knowledge.

"I lived long enough to get a good education, and

eventually to become president, because of the indigenous knowledge of my community in Masasi, southern Tanzania," he said.

The book has been published by the World Bank to mark five years of its IK programme.

The president further said that traditional medicine cured him of illnesses and infections in his tender age while traditional knowledge and skills enabled his parents to put food before him every

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## **‘Graft declining in Tanzania’**

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day. The launch was co-ordinated from Washington DC and had witnesses via videoconference in Burkina Faso, Ghana and neighbouring Uganda.

“And there are many of my age in this room and elsewhere on our continent that are alive today, and are eminent people in government and business, only because they too were kept alive by indigenous knowledge,” he said.

He observed that IK also represented both national heritages and resources that in today’s world called for protection, promotion, development and conservation. The second South-South Bio-piracy summit held in Johannesburg two years ago, he said, identified biodiversity as Africa’s richest asset though it benefited multinationals more.

“In many cases, we have lost what has been ours, but which has been exploited by others and ultimately even rendered inaccessible to us as original contributors to the value chain of what turned out to be commercially available products.”

He said Tanzania was ready to host a global forum in partnership with the World Bank and other development partners on IK where issues related to new approaches property rights would be discussed.

In a vote of thanks, Mr Callisto Madavo, the Senior Advisor to the World Bank President, said the president’s speech was highly inspiring and that it had rekindled memories of his own past in the hands of his mother.

Earlier, inviting the president to deliver his keynote speech, the Minister for Science Technology and Higher Education, Dr Pius Ng’wandu, said IK was a key element of the social capital of the poor and constituted their main asset in efforts to gain control of their own lives.