

## “Mungu Ibariki Africa”

“Mungu Ibariki Africa” became the national anthem of Tanzania after it was established in the 1960s.

“Mungu Ibariki Africa” means God Bless Africa in Swahili. The United Republic of Tanzania refers to the unification of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The name signifies the combination of both names. Tanzania was a German colony until WWI when Great Britain was given control of it as a result of Germany’s punishment for WWI. On the other hand, Zanzibar was a Portuguese trading post known for its slaves and Middle Eastern trade. The two territories united in 1964. As a result of the differing territories and their histories, their path to unification required more than some other African countries.

The track was included for the course because we were studying several anthems from other African countries, one of which was South Africa. “Mungu Ibariki Africa” uses the same music as the South African National Anthem “Nkosi Sikelel’i Africa.” The music was originally written by Enoch Sontonga, a South African Christian composer. It was first recorded in 1923 by a founding member of the African National Congress. Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. After learning about the music of Tanzania, we also learned about the nation-building process for Tanzania. The song was meant to unify not just people but also two territories in hopes of creating a sense of a national identity.

The lyrical component of the song is a call and response. Children sing the first lines followed by adults. The beginning of the song refers to Africa as a whole while the second set refers to Tanzania. It refers to the people as “children of Tanzania” implying a familial-like connection among the people. The lyrics are very unifying because they don’t leave out anyone. The music itself surges during the response of the call and response. It gets louder as if emphasizing the response of the chorus, and in turn, emphasizing the importance of being unified and acting as a group despite any cultural or geographic differences.

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