



November 23, 2004

Tanzania Care deserves a pat on the beck

On Tuesday this week the Ministry of Health received an important visitor from the US. The Health and Human Services Secretary, Tommy Thompson travelled to Tanzania to see for himself the care of those on need, and certainly to give moral support to those suffering.

The Minister, among other things, aimed to visit the Tanzania Care programme; a multi year initiative that is focused on modernising the healthcare facilities and improving services and access to care for people living with HIV/AIDS throughout Tanzania.

His brilliant and spontaneous speech delivered at Muhimbili National Hospital tells it all and is enough evidence that the Minister himself is deeply committed to help people who have been or are still suffering. In his own words, he stressed collective efforts and cooperation in the community.

Tanzania is amongst those developing countries which have been hit hard by HIV/AIDS, and up to now about 1.6 million people are reportedly living with the disease. This is a significant challenge the country is facing.

Despite the gravity of the situation it is quite impressive to learn that friends of Tanzania, especially the US Government stand shoulder to shoulder with our government in fighting the deadly disease.

The US\$ 49 million injected to Tanzania recently as part of President Bush's emergence plan for AIDS Relief is enough evidence that the US Government is fighting hard for Tanzania and Africa in general.

Care Tanzania has done a commendable job which we must comment, particularly the building of a modern three-storey outpatient centre at Muhimbili National Hospital, which will house 26 examination rooms, a pharmacy and training facility for healthcare professionals.

The good news is that when the building is completed over 400 patients will be able to receive services daily. Other developments include training staff on HIV care and treatment, strengthening the healthcare management administration and systems and increase the access to HIV testing throughout Tanzania. Such initiatives are good for the sake of the wellbeing of the nation.

The Government of Tanzania, through its Health Minister is also fighting hard for its citizens, it is our hope that it will continue the fight in the same vigour.