

Concerted efforts urged to combat HIV/Aids in Isles

From ISSA YUSSUF in Zanzibar

DESPITE the ongoing awareness campaign, concerted efforts are still required to meet global target of having zero new HIV infection by 2015, Zanzibar Ministry of Health has said.

“The HIV prevalence in general population may be stable, but in risk groups like same sex, and drug users, HIV is spreading rapidly,” said Dr Mohammed Saleh Jidawi, Principal Secretary (PS) - Zanzibar Ministry of Health.

The message was contained in his speech during the opening of a meeting organized by the Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) to introduce itself in Zanzibar, marking the beginning of its services in the islands.

THPS, is a Tanzanian non-governmental organization (NGO) that supports the government, through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, to deliver comprehensive HIV prevention, care, and treatment services.

THPS, was formed in 2011 by technical staff who previously had worked within International Centre for AIDS Care and Treatment Programmes (ICAP) at Columbia University. All programmes which were previously under ICAP will now be taken over by THPS.

The Programme was part of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) five-year strategy, which called for PEPFAR-funded HIV activities to transition from international organizations engaged in an emergency response to the epidemic, to indigenous partners leading sustainable country programmes.

THPS has just started implementing the five-year programme (2013-18) aimed at providing comprehensive HIV prevention, care and treatment services in Pwani, Mtwara, Kigoma regions and extending its work to Zanzibar by September, this year.