

Dar in dire need of health experts

**From TUMA ABDALLAH
in Washington**

TANZANIA is in dire need of more health experts to expedite national efforts aimed at combating diseases, both communicable and non-communicable.

Speaking during a familiarisation tour at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) here yesterday, President Jakaya Kikwete said despite making greater strides in ensuring improved health of its people, acute shortage of health experts was hampering the endeavour.

The president asked the institutes and other relevant American stakeholders to help Tanzania build its capacity in combating diseases, which are one major enemy of development.

Mr Kikwete who was flanked by President Dennis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, said it was only with adequate health experts that Tanzania would be able to effectively combat diseases through provision of excellent prevention and curative services.

He, however, thanked the NIH, Bill and Melinda Gates foundation as well as other partners for their valuable and continued support to the health sector which has enabled the country increase the number of neurosurgeons from three to six.

NIH which is part of the US Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research.

The institutes' scientists help to lead the way toward important medical discoveries that improve people's health and services by in-

vestigating ways to prevent diseases as well as the causes, treatments and even cures for common and rare diseases.

Composed of 27 institutes and centres, the NIH provides leadership and financial support to researchers throughout the world.

During the tour, the president was accompanied by the Minister for Health, Dr Seif Rashid, Tanzania's Ambassador to the US, Mrs Liberata Mulamula, National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) Director, Dr Mwele Malecela and a Research fellow and Senior Lecturer at the Muhimbili University of Health Sciences, Dr Julie Makani.

Yesterday evening the president who is in Washington to attend the US-African Leaders Summit, was expected to meet Tanzanians living in Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia and some neighbouring states.