

Development Partner statement for Launch of External Evaluation
of the Health Sector
19 March 2008

Honourable Minister,
Permanent Secretaries,
Chief Medical Officer,
Senior Government Officials from MOHSW, PMO-RALG & MOF,
Members of Civil Society and the Private Sector,
Development Partners,
Mabibi na Mabwana

Habari za asubuhi

On behalf of the Development Partners Group for Health, we welcome this opportunity to participate in this launch of the Report of the External Evaluation of Tanzania's Health Sector. This evaluation fully complies with the Joint Assistance Strategy, where a number of stakeholders have come together to jointly fund, participate in and utilise the findings of this evaluation. Indeed, Tanzania should be proud to have taken part in what is considered to be the first joint evaluation of an entire sector.

Why is evaluation important? The OECD DAC describes evaluation as the following: '*The systematic and objective assessment[which] should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors*'. With regards to the findings of this evaluation, we see that over the last

seven years, there has been a significant improvement in the health sector in Tanzania. In particular the evaluation revealed that the Sector Wide Approach has largely been a success. It has strengthened national ownership and secured higher levels of both domestic and external financial resources for health. This in turn has delivered real improvements. For example, infant and child mortality have been reduced significantly and drug availability and services have improved at health facilities. Decentralised planning and implementation combined with contributions to the Health Basket Fund in particular were found to have contributed towards improvements of health services at the local level.

Referring back to the evaluation definition I mentioned at the beginning, the findings should enable the *'incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors'*. Here we look to the continuation of successful strategies, while at the same time reviewing where progress has been slower. The evaluation particularly notes that maternal mortality remains at alarming levels. Despite previous national efforts to address maternal morbidity and mortality, a woman dies every hour in Tanzania from pregnancy related complications, many of which can be prevented. We welcome the evaluation recommendation that reducing maternal mortality be developed as a new key strategy in the next Health Sector Strategic plan in order to give it the required focus and attention.

Other areas which will require increased attention based on the evaluation findings are:

1. the reform to improve hospital care;

2. the strengthening of public private partnerships;
3. the need for better infrastructure to address the shortages of water supply, electricity and communication equipment; and
4. Human Resources development, posting and retention.

The evaluation further states that Global Health Initiatives and large bilateral programmes have injected much-needed resources into the fight against diseases that are national priorities. However these remain largely outside existing health planning and management systems and this distorts local priorities and threatens sustainability.

With increasingly more international momentum behind making aid more effective, in the lead up to the third high level forum in Accra, Ghana in September, Tanzania needs to make the most of its international reputation for being a leader in aid harmonisation. In line with the JAST, greater steps are therefore needed to ensure that:

1. more aid is on budget and using government systems,
2. that national ownership is enhanced,
3. mutual accountability is promoted and that
4. ultimately Tanzania's development results are achieved.

Finally, while evaluation plays an important role, it does not replace the need to regular and constant monitoring. This year the government is introducing an annual performance report for each Ministry which will provide on-going information on whether policies are delivering their intended results. This is a welcome initiative and we look forward to monitoring the performance of the

sector using this up-to-date information at the next Joint Annual Health Sector Review.

We extend our appreciation to the Ministry of Finance for its leadership in this evaluation which was completed on time and within budget. We also express our thanks the Ministry of Health, local government authorities, faith-based organisations, civil society and private sector who took part in this important exercise from the inception workshop to commenting on the final report. We are pleased to be part of this launch whereby the evidence-based findings can be widely disseminated and used in the on-going health planning and budgeting and in the development of the next Health Sector Strategic Plan.

Asanteni Sana