

Eye diseases among top 10 challenges in country

By Karama Kenyunko

EYE related ailments are among the top ten critical health problems of the country, according to the Health and Social Welfare Minister, Dr Seif Rashid.

Speaking during the official opening of an Eye Unit at Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital in Dar es Salaam over the weekend Dr Rashid said the country is yet to acquire data blindness cases because no research on the subject has been conducted.

“A population based blindness survey has not yet been conducted and so the actual national level of blindness prevalence is not known,” he conceded.

However, he said the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the prevalence of blindness in developing countries ranges from 0.5 to one percent pointed out.

The leading causes of blindness in the country (with percentage in brackets) are cataract (50), corneal (20) and glaucoma (10), he noted.

Others include uncorrected refractive errors, retinal and optic nerve diseases, diabetes, retinopathy, genetic anomalies and albinism that account for the remaining 20 percent.

Dr Rashid said the newly opened centre is expected to offer better eye services to wananchi at affordable charges.

He took the time to reassure stakeholders that the second National Eye Care Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that such services are significantly improved to fulfill the global vision of 2020 that emphasizes the right to eye sight initiative.

The minister was also keen to note that the facility would also assist the ministry towards attainment of its strategic plan and that it is a good example of the benefits of Private Public Partnership.