

A SHORT film on voluntary medical male circumcision was screened here yesterday, as campaigners call for everyone's participation to make Tanzania HIV/AIDS free.

"Let us work together for a better Tanzania. All groups have a role to play in combating the spread of HIV," said Mr Brian Rettmann, Coordinator, PEPFAR in Tanzania after the screening of the 12-minute film at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Zanzibar yesterday.

Viewers commended the good work by the film makers, as Ms Hally Mahler, Director of HIV programme, Jhpiego- Tanzania, thanked the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) for selecting the film for the 2014 festival.

Artist, Mr Fareed Kubanda aka 'Fid Q', who was one of the film narrators, said at the screening event that "artists can play a bigger role in promoting public health interventions that are saving lives like the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC)."

Dr Gesenge Lija, VMMC focal person and head of STI/HIV Services, Union in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare said the film was made in Njombe and Iringa regions, "but the circumcision programme is being implemented in 11 regions of Tanzania mainland."

Lija said there have been good response from people in targeted areas, and that the film will be screened at the 2014 AIDS conference next month in Melbourne, Australia.

He also thanked PEPFAR, USAID and other development partners for supporting the campaign in the country saying that conclusive research shows that medical male circumcision substantially reduces men's risk of acquiring HIV infection through vaginal sex, making it an important addition to HIV prevention strategies in eastern and southern Africa.

He said that in December 2006, scientists announced the results of two randomised controlled trials of male circumcision for HIV prevention. Conducted in Kenya and Uganda, these studies confirmed the findings of an earlier trial in South Africa that getting circumcised reduces a man's chances of becoming infected with HIV by *about 60 per cent*.