

# Over 1000 centres now get free ARVs

**By Correspondent  
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FREE Antiretrovirals (ARV) have been distributed to some 1,209 healthcare and treatment centers countrywide for free distribution to patients.

The announcement was made on Wednesday in Dar es Salaam by the government's Chief Medical Doctor, Donald Mbandu at a health stakeholders meeting convened to commemorate ten years of AIDS relief programmes through a five member consortium funded by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

He said the government is working in collaboration with AIDS relief partners to implement a care and treatment model that emphasises its core components equally, clinical care, strategy information and site management. Detailing, he said currently, healthcare providers, community members and implementing partners efforts have reduced HIV infection from 7 per cent in 2003 to 5.1 percent this year.

According to him, it was initially estimated that by the end of 2012, the number of people living with HIV was 1.6 million and total of 68,447 newly HIV infected people aged 15-49 years.

However the 2002 research report showed that

70.5 of new HIV infection were in the age 25-49 age group and 15 percent in the 15-24 age groups.

About 72,000 newborn babies were infected with HIV in 1999 and estimated number of orphans is over 600,000, he said.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Country Representative, Conor Walsh said that their role is to ensure efficiency of support programmes.

He said it also has the duty of supervising, monitoring and institution strengthening so that care and health services are offered as expected.

"Today AIDS Relief/Lead consortium is grateful to witness that health services given to the HIV/AIDS been scaled up and improved," Walsh said.

He said recently the AIDS Relief/Lead consortium has extended its services in Mwanza and Arusha region apart from Handeni District in Tanga, and Mara Region.

According to him, the deep commitment to partnership underscored AIDS Relief's relationship and capacity strengthening activities have led to the success.

"Our duty was broad, to identify and manage treatment failure or other adverse drug effects, to diagnose, treat and prevent opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis and pneumonia," he noted.