PRESS STATEMENT **29 May 2011**

MoHSW Budget Discrepancies Counterproductive

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's 2010/2011 budget is non-conforming, unrealistic, ineffective and inconsistent which is likely to contribute to its malfunctioning.

This revelation follows the Ministry's 2010/11budget analysis conducted by Sikika, an NGO advocating for quality health services for all Tanzanians. Health sector budget analysis is one of Sikika's major undertakings to advocate for efficient and effective budget allocation and utilization. The analysis report has been released today and can also be accessed at www.sikika.or.tz

Sikika has analyzed the allocation for the health sector with a special focus to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare as well as regional health related budgets for Tanzania and realised that the plans accommodated double allocations as well as contradicting plans although there was a considerable decrease in unnecessary expenditures.

Double Allocations
There is double allocation in the budget, while it is the National Assembly's responsibility to pay for Members of Parliament's visits to their constituencies, the Ministry's Directorate of Policy and Planning planned to spend 75 mil shillings for the Minister, Deputy Minister and four officials to visit their respective constituencies. A discrepancy such as this is unacceptable considering the fact that the 75 mil shillings alone is more than twice what regions will receive as allocations for their multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS projects or for the activities for the prevention of transmission of HIV/AIDS. The allocation for these projects in the Primary Health Sector Development Programme is 30 mil shillings per region.

Unrealistic Planning
In the very same budget under scrutiny, in sub vote 1005, under the category items 'Travel out of country', the Ministry allocates 100,000 shillings for travel, but, realistically, the money is not enough for that activity. This raises concerns that these allocations are not done seriously; otherwise a discrepancy like this would not be seen in the plans.

Ineffective Planning
Showing the ineffectiveness of the plans, commemoration of the World Malaria Day this year is planned to use more than Tsh 62 mil, the expenditure which could be cut and be directed to areas like purchases of mosquito nets thus reducing the dissemination of malaria.

Despite rising cases of cancer in Tanzania, the Ocean Road Cancer Institute did not receive any local or foreign funding in 2010/11 so is the Chief Government Chemist section.

Unequal Planning
Reacting to the analysis, Sikika's executive director, Mr Irenei Kiria said 'while the increased development expenditures to fight HIV/AIDS are welcome in this budget, these funds have been allocated without the consideration of HIV/AIDS prevalence rates', adding that regions which suffer most do *not* receive significantly more development funds to curb the spreading of the pandemic. The analysis reveals that while Iringa region exhibits the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 16%, its per capita development spending on HIV/AIDS amounts only Tsh 328, whereas Arusha region, which is among those with the lowest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the country (2%), receives Tsh 411 per capita.

Non-conforming Plans
In the analysis it was evident that although the planning and budgeting in the health sector is guided by key policies and strategic plans, there were occasions when non-conformity of the plans was observed as these key documents guiding the ministry were contradicting each other and not in tune with the Ministry's plans.

For example, while the Primary Health Services Development Program (PHSDP) states that 59.8bn shillings will be spent for the implementation of activities relating to human resource for health in 2010/11 financial year, the Health Sector Strategic Plan III plans to spend 119.1bn shillings and Human Resources for Health strategic plan indicates 90.3 bn shillings for the same activity in the same year.

Recommendations from the analysis

Sikika recommends that for the health sector to improve its performance, it needs much more than a mere increase of financial resources. Sikika believes that an efficient and effective allocation and spending of resources is needed rather than just to increase the funding to the sector as the current trend of allocation and spending does not predict a bright future for the sector.

The organization recommends that in the planning process for the 2011/12 budget, the health sector's needs should be given a priority for the purpose of overcoming sector's challenges. Different policies that guide the sector be aligned and consulted to ensure that resources are allocated according to the stated priorities.

The budget also has to focus on the needs of the people as that helps to solve their problems leading to sustainable development of the Tanzanian health sector. It is also important for the government to ensure that the planning aims at allocating funds to tackle the root problems, rather than symptoms.

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