Over 200,000 households lifted from poverty

From HILDA MHAGAMA in Arusha

MORE than 200,000 vulnerable households across five regions have recorded higher incomes and improved access to education, health and water services following the completion of the fourth Tanzania Poverty Reduction Project (TPRP IV).

Speaking about the project in Karatu District yesterday, Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) Executive Director Mr Shedrack Mziray said the programme, implemented from January 2020, delivered measurable socio-economic results through community-driven interventions.

"This project has directly improved the lives of vulnerable households by expanding access to basic services, strengthening livelihoods and empowering communities to take ownership of their development," Mr Mziray said.

He said TPRP IV was implemented in Arusha, Mwanza, Iringa, Geita and Simiyu regions and was financed by Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC Fund) with 500 million US dollars (about 1.23tri/-).

"The scale of this investment reflects the level of commitment to reducing poverty and building resilient communities. What is important is that these resources were translated into tangible assets and sustainable livelihoods at the community level," he said.

Mr Mziray said the project supported the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, health facilities, water sources and school dormitories, reducing travel distances and improving service availability, particularly in rural areas.

"Our focus was not only on infrastructure, but also on ensuring that households are able to generate income, save and withstand economic shocks," he said.

Mr Mziray further said according to TASAF assessments, around 200,007 households benefited directly from the project, with a response rate of 96.7 per cent.

"Women and youth played a central role, with women accounting for 56.5 percent of household heads involved in project activities.

"Women were at the centre of implementation, from decision-making to savings groups and leadership roles. This has strengthened inclusion and long-term sustainability," Mr Mziray said.

In Laja Village, Village Executive Officer (VEO) Mr Daniel Mpigachai said the project has transformed access to secondary education through the construction of Laja Secondary School.

"Through this project, our village has benefited from a secondary school that includes an administration block, two teachers' houses, four classrooms, toilets and dormitories for both girls and boys," Mr Mpigachai said.

He said TASAF, through TPRP IV, contributed 659m/-, while the community contributed 115m/- to the construction.

"The presence of this school has eliminated truancy and increased students' morale to study. Previously, learners had to attend a ward school located more than eight kilometres away and the school now also receives students from neighbouring villages," he said.

A beneficiary, Mr Andrea Awtu, said the project has changed the education prospects of his children.

"Previously, my children were studying at a ward secondary school that was very far. They started losing motivation to continue with school because of the long distance," he said.

He added, "I am very grateful because this project has enabled our children to study nearby and live in the dormitory."

Mr Mziray said beyond education, the programme strengthened household resilience by supporting income diversification through non-agricultural self-employment, livestock keeping and entrepreneurship training.

"These interventions have improved food security and enabled households to meet their basic needs with dignity," he said.

On accountability, he reaffirmed that all project funds were used strictly for approved activities, supported by strong monitoring, reporting and auditing systems, with payments made directly to beneficiaries as wages.

While acknowledging challenges such as payment delays and gaps in water and health infrastructure, Mr Mziray said the lessons learned will guide future programmes, with a focus on sustainability, climate resilience and expansion to under served areas.

TPRP IV aligns with Tanzania's Vision 2025 and the National Social Protection Framework, supporting inclusive growth and long-term poverty reduction.

JKCI Oysterbay branch records fourfold rise in patient numbers

By DAILY NEWS Reporter

THE Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) Oysterbay Plaza branch is now serving nearly four times the number of patients it was handling last year, reflecting growing demand for specialised healthcare services and Tanzania's rising profile in medical tourism.

The number of patients treated monthly at the facility has increased from 250 to about 900, marking a significant milestone just one year after the branch was opened.

Speaking on Monday during the first anniversary celebrations of the Oysterbay branch, JKCI Executive Director Dr Peter Kisenge said the growth includes a sharp rise in the number of foreign patients, whose monthly figures have climbed from 10 to 120.

"This increase is strengthening medical tourism in Tanzania. These patients are coming from more than 20 countries, including Comoros, Malawi, China, Poland, Congo, England, Mozambique, Egypt, Germany and Italy," Dr Kisenge said.

He explained that some foreign patients initially visit Tanzania for tourism and later seek medical care, while others travel to the country specifically to access specialised treatment at the institute.

Dr Kisenge noted that revenue generated through medical tourism is reinvested to subsidise treatment for patients who are unable to afford healthcare services, particularly children in need of life-saving heart surgeries.

"This clinic has brought significant benefits to the Institute. The funds generated are used to support patients who cannot pay for treatment, and every month the Institute waives medical bills amounting to more than 200m/-," he said.

According to him, the steady growth in patient numbers and the increase in medical tourists have been driven by improved service delivery, following substantial government investment in healthcare infrastructure and the acquisition of modern medical equipment, including machines that use artificial intelligence.

He added that the establishment of the Oysterbay facility has helped ease congestion at other JKCI centres, including Muhimbili, Temeke, Kawe and Dar Group, where patients previously faced long waiting times.

"Patients whether insured, uninsured or those unable to meet treatment costs are now able to receive services within less than one hour," Dr Kisenge said.

He further said the Institute has significantly reduced the number of patients seeking treatment abroad by introducing advanced home-based monitoring systems.

"Our goal is to ensure that every Tanzanian who cannot afford treatment receives care. We have also reduced referrals abroad. Through special smart sheets, we can monitor a patient's heart rate and blood pressure while they are at home and provide care remotely," he said.

On her part, JKCI Oysterbay Branch Manager Ms Smita Bhalia said the branch has expanded the range of services offered since its inauguration, responding to the evolving needs of patients.

"We now provide services beyond cardiac care, including nutrition therapy, weight management, treatment for chronic joint pain and rehabilitation services for paralysed patients," Ms Bhalia said.

She added that the expansion of services has contributed to the growing number of patients seeking care at the facility, both locally and internationally, reinforcing JKCI's role as a leading centre for specialised healthcare in the region.

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HOME Affairs Minister George Simbachawene presses a button to launch special service number 15274, enabling national ID applicants to track their application status, in Dar es Salaam on Monday. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Home Affairs)

Reliable water supply to spur production

By HARRIET KIAMA

COAST Regional Commissioner, Mr Abubakar Kunenge, has said that the completion of the Kidunda Water Dam in Morogoro Region will enhance efficiency and production in the region's fast-growing industrial sector by ensuring a reliable water supply for industrial use.

He made the remarks on Monday while accompanying the Prime Minister, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, during a visit to the Lower Ruvu Water Plant in Kibaha District, where the PM inspected water production and distribution facilities.

"Our region hosts a number of national strategic projects with a total of 1,631 industries and 27 industrial parks," Mr Kunenge said.

He added that the completion of Kidunda Dam would ensure sufficient water supply to meet the needs of the growing number of industries in the region.

The RC also highlighted the need for natural gas, electricity and quality road infrastructure to keep up with the increasing demands of the investment sector.

"Investing in water, energy and road infrastructure will enable our region to contribute significantly to national income and support the expansion of both people's and the nation's economy," he noted.

Speaking after the inspection, Prime Minister Nchemba said the government had initiated major water projects three years ago as part of its strategy to address the effects of climate change.

He added that these projects aim to provide a permanent solution to the availability of clean and safe water across the country.

Govt moves to safeguard Lake Victoria's fishermen

From MEDDY MULISA in Bukoba

MINISTER for Livestock and Fisheries, Dr Bashiru Ally Kakurwa, has stressed the urgent need to protect the resources of Lake Victoria, the world's second-largest freshwater lake, to safeguard the survival and livelihoods of over 47 million people across Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda.

Speaking on Monday during a working tour in Kagera Region, where he visited the Nile Perch factory in Muleba District, Dr Kakurwa announced banned industries from engaging directly in fishing activities on the lake. He noted that such practices deplete the lake's resources and negatively impact small-scale fishermen who rely on it for their daily livelihoods.

"Encroachment on the 200-metre buffer zone by industries and farmers, along with the use of illegal nets that capture juvenile fish, continues to threaten our resources. Urgent joint action is needed to protect Lake Victoria for the survival and livelihoods of over 47 million people in the region," Dr Kakurwa said.

The Minister highlighted the multiple roles of the lake, noting that it serves as a source of energy and a transport route, supplies water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use, supports ecosystems and the regional economy and helps cushion the adverse effects of climate change.

Lake Victoria also hosts the world's most productive freshwater fishery, yielding over 1.5 million metric tonnes of fish annually, valued at about 1.1 billion US dollars. It remains a key source of freshwater for domestic use, irrigation and industry across East Africa.

However, Dr Kakurwa warned that progressive degradation of wetlands, deforestation in the cross-border catchment, pollution from industries, untreated wastewater, agricultural runoff and overfishing are endangering the lake's ecological balance. Rapid urbanisation, population growth and increasing water demand linked to economic development are further accelerating the challenges.

In 2025, East African Community (EAC) member states renewed their commitment to the Protocol for Sustainable Development (PFSD), emphasising unified climate strategies and increased funding for conservation efforts.

Arusha residents urged to join UHI

From VERONICA MHETA in Arusha

IN a bid to ensure citizens receive timely treatment across hospitals, Arusha District Commissioner Joseph Mkude has launched a campaign encouraging the public to join the government's Universal Health Insurance programme.

The initiative aims to provide unrestricted access to medical care, in line with the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) election manifesto.

Speaking during the programme's launch yesterday in Arusha, DC Mkude said the government has addressed the long-standing concerns of citizens who are not covered under formal insurance schemes. The programme is designed to include all citizens, regardless of income status.

"The reforms in the health sector aim to make treatment affordable for all," Mkude said, urging Local Executives and Councillors to motivate citizens to enrol in large numbers.

He highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to improve health services in collaboration with various stakeholders, including organising medical camps, constructing dispensaries, health centres, district hospitals and referral systems. These initiatives, he noted, have helped ease the pressure on the health sector.

"The reforms in the health sector aim to make treatment affordable for all," Mkude said, urging Local Executives and Councillors to motivate citizens to enrol in large numbers.

Mkude also acknowledged the growing financial burden on citizens. "Many people have reached out to leaders asking for help to cover hospital bills. While we occasionally intervene, this Health Insurance for All programme offers long-term relief," he said.

Deputy Mayor of Arusha City Council, Julius Sekeyani, pledged to support the programme by encouraging councillors to educate citizens about it. He stressed that the scheme would help residents cope with rising medical costs, particularly for diseases requiring long-term treatment.

"We expect citizens not covered by regular health insurance to embrace this programme and contribute the required 150,000/-, which will guarantee treatment as outlined by the government. Healthy citizens are crucial for building our country's economy," Sekeyani said.

Miraji Kisile, Membership Officer of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) in Arusha, added that the Universal Health Insurance programme is a legal requirement, where citizens contribute through a specific procedure.

Currently, in Arusha Region, 353,438 citizens, or 15 per cent of the population, have joined the scheme out of a total of 2,356,255 residents. Authorities stress that more education is needed to encourage greater enrolment so that more citizens can access medical services.