

***SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR MZUMBE UNIVERSITY, PROF. LUGHANO KUSILUKA AT SEASCAPE HOTEL DURING THE FIRST ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE, 11<sup>TH</sup> – 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017***

- Honorable Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly And Children, **Ummu Mwalimu (MP)**,
- Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Mzumbe University, **Prof. Ganka Nyamsogoro**,
- Director of Health, Social Welfare and Nutrition Services, PORALG, **Dr. Ntuli Kabologwe**,
- Acting Director of Policy and Planning, MoHCDEC, **Mr. Edward Mbaga**,
- Assistant Director of Health Services, PORALG, **Dr. Anna Nswila**,
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Zanzibar Malaria Elimination Programme, **Mr. Mohamed Haji Ali**,
- Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (NACP), **Mr. Veryeh Sambu**,
- Country Director, University of California, San Francisco, **Ms Christen Said**,
- Dean of the School of Public Administration and Management, Mzumbe University, **Dr. Stella Kinemo**,
- Representatives of Various Health Services Provisioning Institutions,
- Member of Academic Staff and Students at Mzumbe University,
- Members of the Press,
- Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First, I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Guest of Honor Honorable Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Ms Ummu Mwalimu (MP) for accepting our invitation to grace the opening ceremony of the First Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Best Practices Conference, here in Tanzania. Honorable Minister, we understand that you have heavy administrative responsibilities at national level still you managed to spare some of your time to attend this historic conference ever organized by our country. We feel very much humbled and your presence will glow the spirit of data use that this conference intends to promote as an important instrument for effective improvement and management of responsive and accessible health services to all the people wherever they are.

**Honorable Minister,**

This conference has brought together health stakeholders from different institutions and programmes within and outside the country to share their experiences on Monitoring and Evaluation Best Practices. I hope we have here health care professionals, non-medical health workers and various people working and supporting health related programs and projects.

**Honorable Guest of Honor,**

It is an undisputable fact that without collection of quality data and effective utilization, it is not possible to make evidence - based decisions that are likely to bring positive change to the provision of health services and ultimately to safeguard the health of the population. For sometime now, Mzumbe University through Department of Health Systems Management has been striving to promote the culture of data utilization for the betterment of the health system in the country. It is through such initiative that the University of California San Francisco (USA) stepped in to join hands with Mzumbe University to help realize this important dream.

This Conference is one of the outcomes of the joint collaboration between Mzumbe University and the University of California San Francisco (USA), which has existed since 2013. The collaboration has made significant contribution to Mzumbe University and the Health Sector as a whole through training of health professionals and faculty in Health Monitoring and Evaluation through running a Master, of Science in Health Monitoring and Evaluation, short courses and participation on training workshops and other academic events. It has also enabled establishment of the Center of Excellence in Health Monitoring and Evaluation that is well- designed and well-staffed to provide technical advices through research and consultancies in health monitoring and evaluation. The evidences generated from research and consultancy work are disseminated through the “*East Africa Journal of Applied Health Monitoring and Evaluation*” which was established through the collaboration.

**Honorable Guest of Honor,**

This Conference serves as a forum to share with other professionals and the general public the initiatives that Mzumbe University and University of California, San Francisco have started, and also calling for more collaborative effort to promote a culture of data use in the health sector. It is important to note here that the collaboration between Mzumbe University and University of California, San Francisco is being implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children through its Departments of Human Resources Development, and Policy and Planning.

**Honorable Guest of Honor,**

This conference was planned to be organized in 2015, but due to lack of funds, it was not possible. The implementation of this Conference has not been successful in previous years. The implementation of this conference this year has been possible through the generous support of **New Venture Fund for Global Policy and Advocacy project**, which is a USA organization. We are very grateful to this support. The University would wish to keep this as an annually event, however, for now this dream remains uncertain because organization of the Conference depends on securing support from interested stakeholders within and outside the country. The support of the government to make Mzumbe University a well recognized Center of Excellence in conducting health monitoring and evaluation projects can be a sustainable option for mobilizing and pooling resources to annual organization of the conference. Mzumbe University has already created a pool of experts who are ready to support the government and other health institutions to establish a functioning M&E system and build capacity in translating M&E data to policy and programmes.

Despite of the accumulated resources since the joint effort to promote data use in the health sector by Mzumbe University and its collaborators, the University still requires infrastructure, equipment and more staff necessary to facilitate to become a national and global player in Health Monitoring and Evaluation. The level reached so far in promoting a culture of data use in the health sector is significant but it could have been miles away if the resources required were available. Some of specific resources required include, a strong ICT support environment, and strong networking with Government and its institutions particularly, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children; and President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government. We believe that the Government support would make us grow stronger enough to contribute to the improvement of our health systems and make it responsive to the health needs of all Tanzanians.

**Honorable Guest of Honor,**

We are aware that the Local Government Authorities are implementing the improved PlanRep that is *Facility Financial Accounting and Reporting System (FFARS)*. Previous versions of PlanRep were designed to prepare plans and budget from the higher local government (Council) while facilities were not fully captured by the system. The improved PlanRep is designed to capture plans and budget from service provider level (facility) and to track budget, expenditure allocations and services outputs. This

enables each service provider to have an opportunity to monitor and evaluate its activities to enhance value for money.

With this respect, Mzumbe University will continue to support the government to achieve the intended systemic goals through conducting short courses on Monitoring and Evaluation and by increasing enrollment of students studying Masters of Science in Health Monitoring and Evaluation. In addition, the University is preparing the comprehensive short course for Health Providers at the lower level (Dispensaries and Health Centre) to build their capacity on how to perform simple analysis of the data collected. This will impact the culture of data use to facilities' staff which will automatically improve the quality of data collected and enables evidence- based planning and budgeting.

We request the Ministry to give the Mzumbe Centre of Excellency in Health Monitoring and Evaluation the special support to monitor and evaluate various health programmes implemented by the Ministry of Health Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children. By doing so, Mzumbe University will become the hub of knowledge on Monitoring and Evaluation whereby the Ministry will have the place to receive the periodic updates for policy, guideline, plans and program improvement. Meanwhile, there are a lot of best practices from large and small-scale programmes, which are lost after the programmes have phased out.

**After this few remarks, I now have a singular honour to welcome you address the delegates and officiate the opening of our First Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Best Practices Conference.**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR LISTENING!**