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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government of Tanzania Launches New Social Welfare Assistant Training Program**

**PEPFAR-funded partnership between the Institute of Social Work and the University of Illinois-Chicago Continues to Spearhead Social Welfare Workforce Strengthening Efforts in Tanzania**

**DAR es SALAAM, TANZANIA, 27 June, 2012** — Tanzania will for the first time soon have social workers placed at ward and village levels following the launch of a new Social Welfare Assistants Program at the Kisangara Institute on 30 June. This new training program designed to further strengthen the Tanzania's social welfare workforce is the result of a long-term collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's Department of Social Welfare, the Institute of Social Work, and the American International Health Alliance (AIHA), one of key partners in health systems strengthening in the country.

Social Welfare Assistants represent a new cadre in Tanzania and the Ministry has set a goal of training 6,000 individuals who will help bridge the human resource gap in the health sector thereby strengthening the country's severely overstretched health and social welfare workforce. Once placed, Social Welfare Assistants will play a critical role in ensuring vulnerable populations have access to much-needed care and support services. Following the launch at Kisangara, the program will be rolled out to other Social Welfare Department colleges throughout the country.

Working closely with the Department of Social Welfare, AIHA and its partners at the Institute of Social Work and the University of Illinois-Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work and Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center started developing the educational program to train Social Welfare Assistants in 2011. The curriculum and training materials were approved by the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) in 2012. The job of Social Welfare Assistant is now an established Government position with a Scheme of Service adapted in 2008 by both the Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office on Regional and Local Government Affairs. They will be deployed and overseen by the Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with the Institute of Social Work.

The Social Welfare Assistants Program was developed to complement the existing Para Social Work Program, which was launched in 2007 through the AIHA partnership thanks to support from the American people through the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Tanzania. The partnership was established through AIHA's HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Program.

In close collaboration with the Tanzania Human Resource Capacity Project, partners have to date trained more than 4,026 Para Social Workers, 642 Para Social Worker Supervisors, and 103 Master Trainers across the country. AIHA and its partners have also supported the development and standardization of a social work curriculum across 12 universities through the Tanzania Emerging Schools of Social Work Initiative and are strengthening the capacity of the Tanzania Social Workers Association (TASWA), a national professional association for social workers.

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