

# THISDAY

*The voice of Transparency*

HOME | Thursday, April 02 2009

**Publisher:**  
Media Solutions Ltd

**Printer:**  
TK Printers

**Ag Managing Editor:**  
0754 304 329

**Deputy Managing Editor:**  
0754 304 329

**News Editor:**  
0787 465 762

**Chief reporter:**  
0784 387 918

**Sports Editor:**  
0752 195 349

**Newsroom:**  
4th floor, Haidery Plaza  
Tel: +255 22 211 0478, or  
Tel: +255 22 211 0462/3  
Fax: +255 22 211 0478

**Advertising:**  
Ground floor,  
Haidery Plaza  
Tel: 0713 472 747  
Tel: +255 22 212 7264  
Fax: +255 22 212 7264

## Finn's Facts: End the monopoly of Becton Dickinson at Ministry of Health

FINNIGAN WA SIMBEYE  
DAR ES SALAAM

VENERANDA Sanga, an orphan who lived with HIV/AIDS from Bulongwa in Makete District in Iringa Region succumbed to death last February. According to medical doctors at Bulongwa Lutheran Hospital where the girl was being treated, she died from opportunistic infections resulting from her deteriorating CD4 count which could not be detected on time.

Activists from 'Pima Ili Uishi kwa Matumaini' blame Veneranda's death on poor treatment and care services being offered at BLH and specifically lack of effective CD4 counting machines as Becton Dickinson's FACSCount machine maintains its monopoly of the local market.

I last visited BLH last year when I found out that the hospital had two non-functioning BD FACSCount machines, one of which had broken down while the other was brand new and the American company's exclusive agent in the country. Dar es Salaam based Biocare Health Products Limited was yet to fix it.

I talked and witnessed how people living with HIV/AIDS were failing to get an update of their CD4 count due to lack of functioning machines. Makete District Hospital which had one functioning BD FACSCount machine was rendering services on a weekly basis to BLH's patients.

Several people living with HIV/AIDS I talked to told me they had gone for over six months without an update of their CD4 count. Veneranda could have been saved if PIUMA's CD4 count services with a German made Cyflow machine which were suspended from BLH several years ago were still in place.

The Cyflow CD4 Counter was allegedly ordered off BLH when PIUMA activists questioned loss of millions of shillings from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's southern and central diocese coffers meant to assist HIV/AIDS activities in the country worst hit district by the virus

Experts blame Veneranda's death on BD FACSCount Counters' failure to detect deteriorating CD4 count in infants hence expose them to risks of getting opportunistic infections and possibly death. The sad story is that some officials at Ministry of Health and Social Welfare have crafted an unholy alliance with BD's local agent, BHPL's owner, Bharat Rajani.

The relationship between Rajani and some senior MoHSW officials were described by former Chief Government Chemist, Dr Salum Madati, as questionable. These learned health experts at MoHSW who have used their knowledge and expertise to sabotage other imported technologies such as Cyflow not to be used in the country's public health centres, are comfortably relieved when they hear death of innocent children like Veneranda.

With a new Permanent Secretary in Blandina Nyoni at MoHSW, hopes are high that sanity will finally reign at this sensitive ministry being led by one of the country's most distinguished medical doctors, Professor David Mwakysa.

The monopoly which BD and BHPL are maintaining in the country's health sector particularly in the area of HIV/AIDS is not a normal thing and it needs to be probed by Fair Competition Commission and Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB).

Last week, the government of Venezuela's anti-monopoly unit imposed a fine of \$ 1.6m on the local unit of Becton Dickinson and Co. for abusing its position in the Venezuelan market. The International Herald Tribune reported that the office for the promotion and protection of free competition, Pro-Competencia, said Becton Dickinson Venezuela had refused to sell to its local authorized distributor, Immunolab Lab C.A., chemical reagents used in its medical testing kits for HIV and AIDS patients.

The report said since the US Company controlled a 100- per cent local

## Other news

### FEATURE: SGR funded community development projects help curb poaching

"SINCE I joined Natta Sunflower Project in 2006, I am now financially comfortable. I don't spend sleepless nights like before when it comes to paying school fees for my three children," says Kwali Samson Machaba, a resident of Natta-Mbiso village, situa

### New Madagascar 'leader' Rajoelina now has a lot of thinking to do

THE Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is reported to have asked renegade Madagascar leader Andy Rajoelina to hand over power to the Speaker of the Madagascar Parliament, or face a possible ouster by external forces.

### As global credit crunch bites harder: BoT seeks safer haven for foreign exchange reserves

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) has moved the country's foreign reserves amounting to \$2.8bn from foreign commercial banks and stock markets around the world, to central banks it perceives as 'havens of peace' in the midst of the global economic meltdown.

## Sports news

### ABIDJAN STADIUM DEATHS: CAF sends condolences

THE Confederation of African Football (CAF) has ordered this weekend's inter-clubs matches to observe a minute of silence before kick-off.

### Gvt asked to employ judo coach

THE Judo Association of Tanzania (JATA) has asked the government to engage a national coach to replace Japanese Yoshiyuki Mizouchi, who returned home recently.

### Yanga make U-turn, to play at National Stadium

MAINLAND champions Young Africans have changed their mind and are now ready to host Egypt's Al Ahly at the ultra-modern National Stadium for their African Champions League tie on Saturday.

market share for the FACSCount diagnostic systems used in the treatment of AIDS in Venezuela, the move by the US company put the local patients at risk.

Indeed in Tanzania and as can be testified by Veneranda's death, BD's monopoly is putting tens of thousands of Tanzanians living with HIV/AIDS at risk because apart from delicate use of FACSCount machines, its reagents are also becoming more expensive and rare.

Authorities at MoHSW should urgently address this issue of giving BD monopoly of supplying CD4 counting machines and reagents which is causing unnecessary death of toddlers such as Veneranda Sanga. We must borrow a leaf from Venezuela's anti-monopoly unit and end FACSCount exclusivity by allowing competing technologies to be purchased and used by public health centres.

---

Copyright©Thisday Ltd. | Site designed and maintained by: Infocomtechnologies Ltd.