



**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**

**SPEECH BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR. EMMANUEL NCHIMBI, VICE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE
OPENING OF THE 2026 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE OF THE
SOCIETY OF NEURO-ONCOLOGY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
(SNOSSA)**

**JOHARI ROTANA HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM
13TH JULY, 2026**

- ***Hon. Omar Mchengerwa (MP), Minister of Health;***
- ***Hon. Albert Chalamila, Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner;***
- ***Hon. Dr. Florence Samizi (MP), Deputy Minister of Health;***
- ***Mr. Ismail Rumatila, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health;***
- ***Ambassador Dr. Mpoki Ulisubisya, Director of the Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI);***
- ***Prof. Alan Davidson, President of the Society of Neuro-Oncology Sub-Saharan Africa (SNOSSA);***
- ***Distinguished dignitaries here present;***
- ***Development partners;***
- ***Conference Participants;***
- ***Members of the Press;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

Good morning!

I feel honored for the opportunity to officiate the opening of the 2026 Annual Conference of the Society of Neuro-oncology in Sub-Saharan Africa, here in Dar es Salaam. On behalf of H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, I wish to welcome all delegates to Tanzania, and Dar es Salaam in particular. Also, I commend the SNOSSA leadership, the Ministry of Health and the entire organising committee for hosting this conference, and most importantly for choosing the United Republic of Tanzania as the host country.

Distinguished Participants;

I am aware that the Society of Neuro-Oncology Sub-Saharan Africa (SNOSSA) has been instrumental in building regional networks, fostering collaborations, and providing a platform for scientific exchanges. As such, this conference has brought together neurosurgeons, neuro-oncologists, radiologists, pathologists, radiation and medical oncologists, palliative care specialists, radiographers, nurses, allied health professionals, researchers, policymakers, and patient advocates to advance neuro-oncology practice in the region. This conference, therefore, provides an excellent platform to engage in

professional discussions for enhancing knowledge and deepening your understanding.

I am impressed by the theme of this conference, which reads ***"Bridging the Gap in Neuro-oncology, for a healthier Future in Sub-Saharan Africa"***. This theme is pertinent as brain and spine tumours continue to pose considerable health challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa, where access to neuro-oncology services remains very limited. I hope that the educational insights gained will both improve your knowledge, especially in addressing the provision of services in resource-limited settings.

Distinguished Participants;

Looking at the Conference's expected outcomes, which include strengthening regional and international collaborations in neuro-oncology; development of context-specific strategies to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care; and recommendations for policy and advocacy to improve access and equity in neuro-oncology care, it clearly shows that the conference will be impactful. Further, it demonstrates the region's commitment to care and building capacity in this area of specialization for related professionals in the region.

Distinguished Participants;

In the case of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to investing in neuro-oncology services and the health system in general by enhancing diagnostic capability, treatment options, and medical equipment infrastructure from the primary healthcare level to the National Hospital. For over 30 years, Cancer treatment has been centralized at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI), but presently three Zonal Hospitals and three private hospitals have started radiation therapy treatment. Furthermore, the Government has greatly improved Radiology and Imaging services at both National and zonal level hospitals, having installed seven (7) new MRI machines, making a total of 13 MRI machines. On CT scan machines, more than 96 CT Scan units are serving communities through both Private and Public facilities, with over 60% coming from Public Facilities.

Distinguished Participants;

Despite these accomplishments, challenges remain. Tanzania, like many other low- and middle-income countries, still faces an increasing burden of neuro-oncological disorders, exacerbated by lifestyle changes, population growth, and demographic shifts. The country experiences a high incidence of brain injuries and mortality resulting from road traffic accidents, which overwhelm the already strained healthcare system. This situation, coupled with a high incidence of strokes linked to non-communicable diseases and a significant prevalence of neural tube defects, exerts tremendous pressure on our healthcare system. Moreover, the escalating burden of these diseases, alongside geopolitical dynamics and a reduction in funding for health investments, endangers the progress we have achieved during these times and necessitates further action on our part.

Distinguished Participants;

During the Second Global Conference organized by the World Federation of Neurosurgeons (WFSN), held in Dar es Salaam from 11 – 18 April, 2026, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania made several commitments to address neuro-oncology challenges. I wish to touch on five key priorities, as follows:

First, we will persevere in our commitment to training and developing human capital, aiming to increase the number of specialized medical professionals, including neurologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, oncologists, and others.

Second, continued improvement of our health infrastructure and technology, encompassing equipping our referral hospitals with state-of-the-art neurosurgical facilities, advanced diagnostic tools, and essential critical care units to support intricate procedures.

Third, championing innovative financing and the utilization of domestic resources to improve access and equity in healthcare delivery.

Fourth, championing research and innovation. We have created registries, including a cancer registry, while also expanding opportunities for our staff to access integrated electronic medical records. This will enhance the availability

of big data for machine learning and bolster advanced digital technology. Moreover, we will continue offering our staff opportunities for knowledge translation and sharing of experiences across various platforms. Conferences like this one are vital in advancing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that Tanzania stays connected to global advancements in neuro-oncology services.

Fifth, enhancing collaboration between public and private sectors to increase efficiency in resource utilization and service delivery across all levels, enhance Public – Private complementarity, and nourish the ecosystem for ensuring universal health coverage for all.

Distinguished Participants;

As I conclude, I wish to once again commend the great job undertaken by the Society of Neuro-Oncology in Sub-Saharan Africa (SNOSSA), and hereby reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Tanzania in spearheading this agenda in the country and beyond. Through ongoing investments, robust collaborations, and the dedication of professionals like you, we are certain to create a healthcare system that addresses the needs of our communities.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It will be a remiss of me to end my remarks without urging you to spare time after this conference to experience our rich culture and breathtaking natural wonders, which include the mighty Serengeti National Park – which is world famous for spectacular wildebeest migration; Ngorongoro Crater – where the big five animals can be found in one place; and Mikumi and Saadani National Parks which are just a few hours from Dar es Salaam; Mount Kilimanjaro; and the spicy island of Zanzibar with its magnificent beaches and many others.

Having said that, **it is my singular honor and pleasure to declare the Society of Neuro-Oncology in Sub-Saharan Africa (SNOSSA) Annual Scientific Conference officially open.**

Thank you.