

# Expert explains why info-tech un-deployed in schools

By Mgeta Mganga

**U**NRELIABLE supply of electricity is one of the factors that hinder use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) for learning purposes.

Principal Scientific officer for Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Hamisi Nguly said recently that rural areas are the most neglected, even in the basics of ICT knowledge.

The use of electronic technology has elsewhere facilitated learning process through the deployment of televisions, radios, computers, Internet, mobile phones and other related IT gadgets.

Nguly said currently very few educational institutions in the country have computer laboratories and other multi-media facilities.

In addition, such facilities are more available in private schools than in public schools and even fewer of these facilities are linked to the internet so as to enable virtual learning.

At universities and other higher learning institutions few computers are available for use by students and academic staff, however they are not enough to meet the demand, he said.

Worst still, the internet access bandwidth for these institutions is limited in the range of 32 kbps -512kbps and also cyber cafes do not currently offer a conducive environment for pricing structure to make them viable as e-learning centres.

Bandwidth refers to the capacity of an electronic media to transmit data of any form.

The void of any local manufacture of ICT equipment in Tanzania provides an ample room for the local dealers and agents to import substandard gadgets, he said.

Few local companies are developing computer application packages and most of the software used by public and private sectors are imported at huge costs.

He urged Tanzanians to go for open source software that is cheaper for small and emerging firms.

Currently, he said, COSTECH was involved in taking initiatives to raise awareness by opening ICT centres in rural areas that would train trainers for rural areas.

In general, there is a shortage of well- qualified professionals of ICT in Tanzania. There are no well- established ICT professional profiles, and a standardized process of evaluation or certification of the different courses offered by various training centres is lacking.

Access to online and distance learning for ICT is also still limited. Furthermore, opportunities for training are mostly limited to few urban centres.

Majority of ICT users in Tanzania often access the Internet through cafes. There was therefore a need to reduce barriers in deploying ICT and in developing the required experts for sustainable participation of Tanzanian society in the ICT industry.