ABOUT ALBINISM
Albinism is an inherited condition in which the body does not produce the pigment melanin, resulting in a person with pale skin, light hair, pinkish eyes and impaired vision.² Albinism is considered a rare condition. WORLDWIDE, it affects only ONE IN 20,000 PEOPLE. In TANZANIA, the rate is much higher with ONE IN 1,429 PEOPLE¹ being affected. With its scorching hot sun, the tropical climate of Tanzania puts people with albinism at increased risk for developing skin cancer at an early age. Simple preventative measures, like wearing a hat or long sleeves and using sun blocks, can shield albino skin from the sun and hopefully help prevent deadly skin cancer.¹ Compared with albinos living in developed countries of the world, a large number of albinos in Tanzania lead lives of utter poverty and are unable to afford these sun-protective items.¹

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN
The International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS) in collaboration with Stiefel, a GSK company, have developed Hats On For Skin Health, a global initiative to raise funds to purchase hats and other items to prevent sun damage among albinos in Tanzania. The majority of this population develops devastating skin cancer, which is often fatal by age 40.¹ Through a worldwide effort, ILDS and Stiefel aim to raise funds to purchase hats and other sun-protective items for albinos living in Tanzania. Hats will be distributed through the Regional Dermatology Training Center (RDT) in Moshi, Tanzania. Anyone can contribute to the cause by visiting www.hatsonforskinhealth.org and making an online donation.

ILDS and Stiefel started working together in 2007, when Stiefel financed construction of the center’s first dermatology hospital ward. RDT is a well-established teaching center, supported by ILDS. The center is located within the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, an area of critical concern in sub-Saharan Africa.

References:
2. Esther Hong, Hajo Zeeb, Michael Repacholi. Albinism in Africa as a public health issue. BMC Public Health. 2006; 6:212