



Uganda Faces Health Services Crisis - Action Group

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THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE QUICK ACTION TO ADDRESS THE TRAGEDY IN UGANDA'S HEALTH FACILITIES - AGHA-UGANDA.

Health facilities in Uganda have long suffered poor conditions including lack of adequate essential utilities like water, electricity and frequent stock outs of essential medicines and supplies. The stories of the health workers and patients alike reveal the tragedy of our national healthcare system in spite of a national budget that has been increasing over the years.

An article in Sunday Monitor 5th/Feb/2012 and on Architectafrica.com, "Health centre runs out of water; closes" revealed that, activities at Ewanga health centre in Arua district were paralyzed after the facility ran short of water and had to be closed temporarily. As a result, patients in need of urgent medical attention had to toil and brave the scorching sun for about 20 to 30 kilometers to nearby facilities in either Yumbe district or Rhino Camp health centre. The water crisis was prompted by the breakdown of the only borehole which had been serving both the health centre and the community, which is UN acceptable.

The same incident happened at Entebbe hospital in November last year where "Entebbe hospital suspends operation over water shortage and lack of power" and "in Jinja referral hospital where more than one hundred fifty people died in the last six months due to frequent load shedding and water shortages. Instabilities in essential utilities like water and power, including essential medicines and supplies, has devastating effects on the health centers' ability to deliver adequate health care. Moreover, health workers in these health units and the whole country, work under unfavorable conditions including, long working hours serving overwhelming numbers of patients and yet, with poor payment. This has fundamentally contributed to poor worker motivation, thus greatly affecting health outcomes and patient safety.

These striking challenges go beyond quick technical fixes but point to the overall poor governance of the health sector and service delivery in the country. Government should reconstruct wrecked health facilities, construct more new bore holes and water storage tanks. It should provide standard by power sources like solar energy and generators for emergencies cases. Working conditions and allowances for health workers should be increased, alongside providing accommodation for health workers. Essential medicines should be made more available and affordable to essential medicines especially in health centers in remote and rural areas.

Why can't the government take quick action to address the tragedy of our health facilities, since it can afford to pay Hassan Basajjabalaba 142.6 billion of shillings and wiring million and billions of money to members of parliament? Ugandans must demand for accountability for their public funds to put an end to wasteful and outrageous expenditure of funds on unproductive activities.

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