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PRESS STATEMENT

CSO call for greater accountability in management of health sub program Public Resources in Uganda

We the Uganda Debt Network convened here at our offices this 22nd day of February 2022, are concerned about the state of transparency and accountability in the management of resources in the country's health sub program.

According to a study undertaken by UDN on accountability for health sub program resources, whereas the health sub program has registered significant increase in its funding from UGX 1,301 Bn in FY 2015/16 to UGX 3,331 Bn in 2021/22, public spending on health remains inadequate. The national health spending as a proportion of total government spending is estimated at 7% in FY 2021/22 and the total health expenditure per capita is estimated at $36.9 compared to the minimum recommended $86 by the World Health Organisation for low income countries.

In FY 2021/22, the largest portion of the health budget (45%) is to be retained at the centre under the Ministry of Health vote while local governments, where the bulk of services are delivered constitutes only 22% of the health budget. Moreover, Government support to the health budget has decreased by 14% from 74% in FY 2011/12 to 60% in FY 2021/22. Furthermore, 93% of the GoU contribution to health is allocated to recurrent expenditure and 7% to development expenditure. This implies that the development component of the health budget is largely funded by Health Development Partners.

Quality of service delivery; According to the NDPIII there is inadequate functionality of health facilities but also notes that there has been a significant increase in access to health services. This pauses a question on quality of services accessed by the population in view of the inadequate functionality of the health facilities.
The auditor general's report (FY 2020/21) captured that in regard to functionality and availability of medical equipment in seven key departments in Mulago National referral hospital, some vital medical equipment was in poor working condition, while others were not fully functional and required replacement .This was attributed to the limited funding provided under the capital development budget of the Hospitals.

Accountability concerns; the auditor general also highlighted issues that have adversely affected performance of the health sub program including;

1. Overpayments and irregular expenditure totaling to UGX 920,905,442 were noted during payment for construction works of the Health Centre IIs in LGs and

municipalities. Furthermore, UGX 209,175,652 was made without providing the breakdown of work items being certified.

2. Mulago National Referral Hospital had liabilities of UGX 2,952,608,319 from the previous year (FY 2019/20). However, payments totaling to UGX3,775,748,845 in respect of the liabilities were made. The Hospital therefore made payments for non-existent liabilities amounting to UGX 1,471,382,369.

3. The Hospital spent UGX. 474,479,100 on refurbishment of the MRI machine. It was noted that the MRI machine was delivered and installed in 2018 and has since never been put to use.

Recommendations

1. GoU needs to step up its efforts of mobilising resources, particularly from domestic sources to bridge the funding gap in the health sub program, especially for development expenditure.

2. District Service Commissions should be urgently constituted where they are non-existent. This will enable the district to recruit staff and to absorb the health department wage. The staffing structure at district and facility level should also be reviewed to cater for cater for changes in population.

3. Implement recommendations from the reports of the various oversight bodies, especially the auditor general's reports.

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