



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



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Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



Connecting poor resource allocation to **health and justice**

"African governments committed to increase their budgetary allocation to healthcare to at least 15% of their national budgets. Uganda is still at 8%."



Female medical practitioners in a past procession. According to experts, having an underfunded health sector with underpaid and inadequate health workers amounts to absence of justice. I @CSBAG2017

Indeed, it isn't uncommon to hear stories of families selling assets such as land and livestock in order to settle medical bills for a sick family member. And this is for the fortunate ones. Mandatory registration to the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), as well as subsidies for the poor are essential if we are to guarantee access to health care for all. I am glad Uganda has started this journey. This is an area where Amref Health Africa can potentially partner with the Ministry of Health, just as we have in other projects across the country, especially in rural areas.

Impact of social conditions

We also have to acknowledge the fact that financial challenges are not the only barriers to accessing quality healthcare. Indeed, the World Health Organisation (WHO) insists that the health sector is not the only contributor to good health and adds that "the social conditions in which people are born, live and work are the single most important determinants of good health or ill health, of a long and productive life, or a short and miserable one." where funds to enable youth startup businesses, can be channeled. This indicates that we not only need a 'good health policy' but 'good policies for health.' We need to empower people to come out of poverty so that they can afford health insurance cover. We also need other interventions that improve living conditions, such as housing and improved access to social goods such as clean water.

In a nutshell, we need to fight poverty in all its forms. The words of Nelson Mandela ought to stir us into action. He reminded us that overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, but an act of justice. Moreover, she understood that one of the most crushing forms of poverty is lacking the health to live a full life, particularly when a solution to the diseases is widely available.

Health and justice

The issues close to Dr Mungherera's heart all directly tie back to justice. For her, what keeps mental health patients unattended to and unfairly labelled as mad men and women in our markets is absence of justice; what results on premature death of mothers and children, and especially newborns, is absence of justice; what results in an underfunded health sector with underpaid and inadequate health workers is absence of justice. As Africans, we need to admit that the presence of poverty in all its forms, and especially in the form of lack access to quality health, is not caused by an absence of wealth but an absence of justice. Good health and justice are inseparable. A healthy nation is first and foremost, a just nation. We, therefore need to build a more just Uganda and a more just continent.

This article was written by Dr Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO of Amref Health Africa.

OUR WORK IN PICTURES



Mr. Ronald Kaggwa of the National Planning Authority speaks to participants as Ms. Susan Nanduddu, ED, African Centre for Trade and Development (ACTADE) and Yusuf Kiranda of the Centre for Development Alternatives look on. This was during a discussion on the social market economy and the national green growth strategy last week.



Participants attending the validation meeting for the CSBAG Performance Based Budgeting study at Ministry of Finance last week.



Former Finance minister Prof. Ezra Suruma speaking about the value of social security during a public dialogue on extending social protection to workers in the informal sector last week. I @CSBAG2017