

Health financing challenged by inadequate resource envelope



Mr. Timothy Musila, Principal Health Officer, Ministry of Health emphasizes a point during the Question and answer session organized by CSBAG today at Ministry of Finance offices. |@CSBAG2015

“The Health Insurance Scheme still requires 454bn to be fully instituted and operationalised” stated Mr. Timothy Musila, the Principal Health Planner at Ministry of Health. He was responding to CSO queries on Health sector financing at a question and answer session organized by CSBAG today, 1st September 2016 at the Ministry of Finance offices.

Mr. Musila informed the meeting that although they had submitted to Ministry of Finance, the financing request for operationalizing the scheme for the next three financial years specifically 102bn in FY 2017/18; UGX 152bn in 2018/19 and UGX 200bn in FY 2019/20. Feedback so far received is that the required funding is too high and cannot be allocated by Ministry of Finance. Consequently, Ministry of Health is revising its figures to meet Ministry of Finance’s requirements and will provide revised rates to Ministry of Finance.

CSOs under the Health Thematic Working Group of CSBAG sought updates from Ministry of Health on the status of the radiotherapy cancer machine at Mulago. To this, Mr. Musila who is the Principal Health Planner at Ministry of Health specified that his Ministry is applying a two pronged approach at his Ministry to address this challenge.

“First one of the approaches is to renovate the old facility and replace the old machine with guidance from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and am glad to note that by March 2017, we should have replaced the cancer machine,” mentioned Mr. Musila. He further informed the meeting that his Ministry had earmarked UGX 25bn for a new radiotherapy facility whose construction is expected to be completed by May 2017.

Musila also gave funding details on reproductive health in Uganda, breaking down Government funding visa vie donor contribution. Specifically he mentioned that the 2016/17 reproductive health budget is UGX 108bn, of which UGX 8bn is funded by Government of Uganda. The rest will be funded by over 10 partners including UNFPA, WHO, World Bank, among others.

CSOs were however not pleased with the Government support which was apparently at 7.4%. They called for increased government commitment towards this area. Diana Tibesigwa from DSW Uganda expressed her concern over the limited financing of reproductive health care at 7.4% while 92.5% will be externally funded. This kind of arrangement undoubtedly affects sustainable provision of reproductive health financing should donors pull out on their commitments.

Mr. Kabagambe, the principle health planner ministry of health however mentioned that though the sector is indeed dependent on external financing for various health care services, the Ministry continues to lobby for increased Government financing for its activities.

In response to the Global Financing Facility that is meant to provide reproductive health materials, CSOs were apprised that the Ministry has developed a Results Framework that will guide effective implementation of the Facility which will be financed by IDA with 110US\$m and leveraged by 30mUS\$ m GOU financing.

Mr. Walimbwa Ali, the Senior Health Planner Ministry of Health, informed the members that the AIDS Trust Fund still requires sourcing of funding by the Ministry of Finance. However Ministry of Health had submitted drafted regulations to Cabinet and is currently Ministry of Health is working on the feedback from Cabinet on the regulations.

Regarding the Ministry of Health securing the youth corners in health centers, the Ministry stated that it has implemented these corners for a while. However providing medical services to the youth requires a joint sector wide approach as there is need to provide other services that may not be medical in nature such as sexual education that can best be provided in schools in order to ensure protection from disease and nurturing of the nation’s youth.

The meeting is part of a broader CSBAG strategy of linking CSOs for a more effective engagement with Government and it was the first CSO-Government Question and Answer session for the FY 2016/17. In attendance was the Commissioner of Budget Policy and Evaluation Mr. Godwin Kakama, the Acting Assistant Commissioner Budget and Finance, Mr. Richard Kabagambe; the Principal Health Planner, Mr. Timothy Musila and the Senior health Planner, Ministry of Health Mr. Walimbwa Ali.

Special thanks go to CSBAG members that attended including: Women and Girl Child Development Association (WEGCDA); National Forum of people Living with AIDS in Uganda (NAFOPHANU); international Community of Women living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA), Uganda National AIDS Support Organization (UNASO), DSW Uganda, Uganda Debt Network (UDN), Partners in population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD-ARO); Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development (HEPS-U) and Programme for Accessible health, Communication and Education (PACE).