BOU boosts hospitals with sh250m equipment

By John Musenze

Bank of Uganda (BOU) has donated 17 patient monitors worth sh250m to the health ministry to strengthen maternal and child healthcare services across the country.

The medical equipment will be distributed to selected health facilities in Soroti city, Karenga, Omoro, Buvuma, Buyende, Wakiso, Nabilatuk, Sironko, Tororo, Kwania, Serere, and Ibanda districts, as well as regional referral hospitals in Lira and Fort Portal.

PHOTO BY NICHOLAS ONEAL



(L-R) Dr Olaro, Atwine, Kanyemibwa, and Sarah Nyachwo the project manager for safe motherhood initiative at Bank of Uganda during the handover ceremony at the Ministry of Health last Friday

FASTER MEDICAL INTERVENTION

The monitors will help health workers track patients' vital signs in real time, enabling faster medical intervention, especially for mothers and newborns in critical condition.

The donation is part of the bank's corporate social responsibility programme launched in 2016 to mark the central bank's golden jubilee and has since supported health infrastructure and equipment across several parts of Uganda.

Speaking during the handover ceremony last Friday at the Ministry of Health headquarters, the Bank Secretary, Susan Kanyemibwa, said the institution believes that national economic progress must go hand in hand with improved health outcomes.

"A thriving nation must also be a healthy nation. While the BOU is widely known for promoting price stability and a sound financial system, we strongly believe that human well-being is equally important for sustainable development," Kanyemibwa said.

Through the safe motherhood campaign, the central bank has invested significantly in strengthening healthcare systems in underserved communities. "Districts that once had dilapidated health centers now have modern facilities. Health centres that lacked operating theaters to conduct life-saving caesarean sections can now perform them and facilities that had no maternity wards now have them," she said.

"These are among the achievements we are most proud of as the BOU approaches 60 years since its establishment," Kanyemibwa added.

The safe motherhood initiative was inspired by the late governor, Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, whose personal experience after losing his mother during childbirth motivated him to champion maternal healthcare improvements. The campaign started with a charity walk that raised funds for life-saving medical equipment that was later donated to Mulago National Referral Hospital.

Health ministry officials welcomed the donation, saying it will help improve the monitoring of critically ill patients in health facilities, with the director general of health services, Dr Charles Olaro, saying the equipment will help Uganda address challenges in neonatal and child survival.

Although Uganda has made progress in reducing maternal deaths, he noted that child mortality remains a concern, particularly among premature and underweight babies.

Close to about 20% of children born in Uganda are underweight or premature, around 220,000 babies every year. These are the children who require constant monitoring so that health workers can respond quickly whenever complications arise."

REDUCING PREVENTABLE DEATHS

Olaro said patient monitors will be deployed immediately to facilities where they are most needed in order to strengthen neonatal care and reduce preventable deaths.

Health ministry permanent secretary Dr Diana Atwine said the monitors will mainly support high dependency units (HDUs) that the Government is establishing across the country to improve critical care services.

"These machines will help clinicians monitor patients continuously and receive real-time information about their condition. Even when a health worker is not physically present at the bedside, the monitor continues to track vital signs and alert clinicians when there is a change," she said

Atwine said improved monitoring is key to enhancing the quality of care, particularly for mothers recovering from surgery and newborn babies, who require close observation.

She said her ministry will ensure the equipment is properly registered and monitored to prevent misuse.

"We shall ensure that once the equipment reaches the facilities, it is captured in the inventory and properly utilised."

Over the past decade, BOU's safe motherhood initiative has supported the construction of health centres in the districts of Mbarara, Arua, Mbale, Gulu, Kabarole, Masaka, Jinja city, Rubanda, Kabale, Mitooma, Katakwi, Hoima, and Lira.

It has also financed the renovation of health facilities and the donation of essential medical equipment and medicines.

CamScanner