

village showcasing the various cultures and heritage, as well as lodges, hotel operators, tour operators, (including hotel operators, learning and experiential buses for short excursions. "It is also going to be a the city and travel in the UWA nas eme-- foreign exchange earner and Capital City Authority. Kampala

# Government to incinerate 1,500 tonnes of expired drugs

By Saphira Nahabwe and Andrew Ssenyonga

The Ministry of Health has launched a drive to dispose of a total of 1,500 tonnes expired and obsolete medicines and other health supplies countrywide.

The permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Diana Atwine, said the move is aimed at cleaning and creating space in the 6,619 health facilities including government owned and private not for profit (PNFP) centres.

"This process will create more space for adequate storage of medicines and other health supplies and prevent risk of public health hazards, pilferage and relabeling as a result of long storage of items," Atwine explained.

During a media briefing at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala on Monday, Atwine noted that expired pharmaceuticals are a growing concern in the country and



Atwine and Kamabale addressing a press conference at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala yesterday. Photo by Wilfred Sanya

can also result in a risk to national security. "It is naturally expected that about 5% of pharmaceuticals in the distribution chain are bound to

end up as obsolete or expired.

The last time such a massive exercise was carried out was in 2012," she said.

Atwine said the three-month

exercise will be executed in joint partnership with the National Drug Authority (NDA), National Medical Stores (NMS) and Joint

Medical Stores. "NDA has set aside resources to pay the contracted provider to incinerate the expired and obsolete medicines and other health supplies," she noted.

On why do the medicines expire given the scarcity of drugs in health facilities, Atwine explained that drugs are sent to facilities while anticipating some cases in an area which end up not showing. "Some medicines are donated to health facilities and end up being too many for the cases reported in a particular area," she noted.

NMS executive director Moses Kamabare said the existing NMS logistics system will be used for collection of the obsolete supplies from the various public and PNFP health facilities across the country. "Collected expired supplies will be temporarily deposited at the NMS stores in Entebbe from where they will be taken for safe disposal,"

he said. He explained that the expired medicines and health supplies will be collected on return journeys after their routine delivery.

Kamabare charged district health officers (DHOs) and those in charge of various health facilities with ensuring success of the one-off exercise.

"This is a one-off exercise and all DHOs and officers in-charge must ensure items are at designated collection points to be picked during NMS delivery cycle for this financial year ending June 2018."

"I urge all DHOs to adhere to the given timelines to ensure that all obsolete items are delivered to designated points to create space for new supplies," he explained.

Kamabare said: "Once brought to our stores, expired drugs will not be stored for more than three days, before being taken to Luwero industries Nakasongola for safe disposal."