

# Mildmay to become teaching hospital

By Jeff Andrew Lule

Mildmay Uganda, a specialised children HIV/AIDS centre, has kicked off its 30-year master plan to turn into a modern training hospital.

The centre has started offering other general health services, alongside the HIV services.

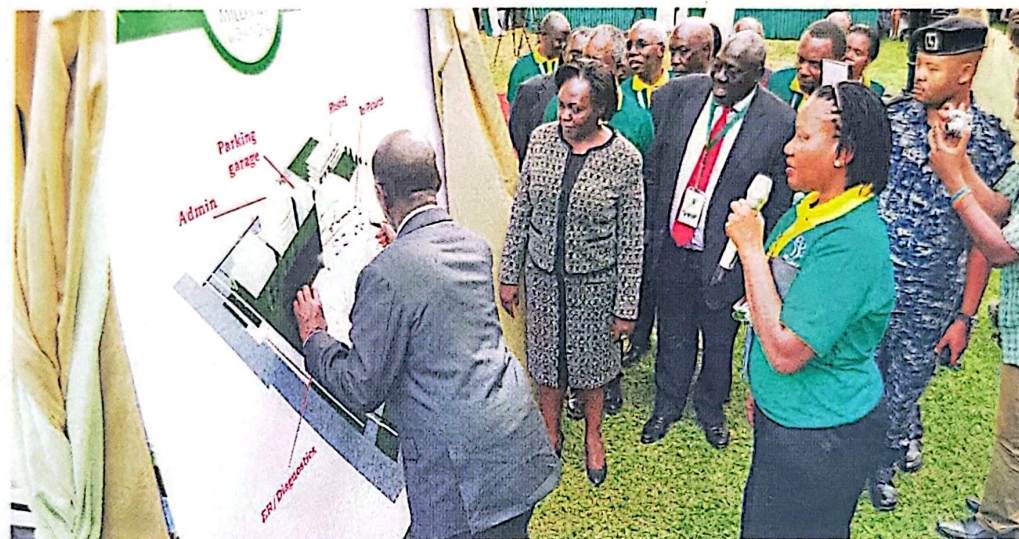
The \$55m (about sh118b) project focuses on expansion of infrastructure and laboratory and increasing access to quality health services.

During the launch of the masterplan at Mildmay Uganda Centre in Lweza, Wakiso district last Thursday, the centre's chief executive officer, Dr Barbara Mukasa, said they want to evolve into a fully-fledged modern not-for-profit teaching hospital, offering comprehensive healthcare services and training as part of her contribution to the national goal of universal access to healthcare.

She said they are already offering other health services, on top of introducing several diplomas specialising in health sciences, accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The facility also grew into a research centre, accredited by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

She said the new move will not affect their efforts towards ending HIV, stressing that the services and programmes are strategically planned to build on the work already done in responding to gaps, constraints and emerging priorities in healthcare.

"The master plan will strategically position Mildmay to contribute more towards ending the HIV epidemic



Ssekandi signing an autograph on a banner last week to launch Mildmay's 30-year master plan. In the front row are Opendi, MP Makindye division Ssempera Kigozi and Mukasa. Photo by Juliet Kasirye

through the presidential fast-track initiative on HIV and AIDS strategy, which was launched by the President recently; provide strategic economic growth interventions, enable infrastructure expansion to increase access and provision of quality services," Mukasa explained.

While launching the master plan, the Vice-President, Edward Ssekandi, who represented President Yoweri Museveni, said the move is timely, as it would supplement the Government's efforts in improving the quality of health services countrywide.

In his speech, read by Ssekandi, President Museveni commended the centre's strategic growth model, saying

## ON THE GROUND

■ The state minister for general duties at the Ministry of Health, Sarah Opendi, said out of the 230 people who are infected with HIV daily, 44% are youth

it is expected to be the guiding model for management and administration of sustainable local private-not-for-profit teaching hospitals.

He acknowledged Mildmay's support towards the Government's initiative to eradicate HIV in Uganda.

Museveni, who is also the patron of Mildmay, said in 1998, the Government donated land for the project and Mildmay opened its gates to the public for comprehensive HIV care, with a special focus on children.

He said Uganda had over 3,000 children waiting for the life-saving drugs through President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2004.

Today, Mildmay offers support care for over 100,000 people (15% ) of the total number of clients on ART, 7,000 of whom are children," he added.

Museveni said since 2014, all children born to HIV-positive mothers at Mildmay have remained HIV-

negative, urging them to continue promoting the campaign for, especially HIV-positive mothers to know that they can have an HIV-free generation after them.

He said the NRM will continue supporting initiatives aimed at enhancing linkages, referrals, follow-up and other systems to ensure that 90% HIV treatment enrolment for all diagnosed people and 90% viral suppression for all people accessing treatment.

Dr Richard Wanyama, the officer in of charge sustainability and partnerships at Mildmay, said they have already introduced programmes for nursing and midwifery, medical laboratory technology and clinical officers.

Mildmay's laboratory works as a national backup system for the Central Public Health Laboratories in viral load testing and databank. The laboratory handles 8,000 patients for viral load tests.

The state minister for general duties at the Ministry of Health, Sarah Opendi, said Uganda still has challenges with quality health human resource. She said HIV is still a major problem, especially among the youth.

"We get 250 people infected with HIV daily and 44% of these are youth. Our focus is now on men and youth. Few men and youth turn for HIV screening," she said.

The board chairman of Mildmay, Prof. Sam Luboga, said the facility will include an academic section, hostels, an inpatient section, emergency room, diagnostics, administration and parking space. He said they still need more 25 acres of land for the project.