



The trucks that were handed over by the health ministry to Jinja and Masaka hospitals. Work at medical facilities stall due to a shortage of spares. Photo by Nancy Nanyonga

# Masaka, Jinja hospitals get mobile workshops

By Violet Nabatanzi

Masaka and Jinja hospitals have received mobile workshop trucks worth sh720b to support service delivery.

The main function of the mobile workshop truck is to repair medical equipment. This comes at a time when regional referral hospitals and the lower health facilities have been lacking tools and spare parts for use in maintaining medical equipment.

"When we do not have tools to calibrate a machine, the doctor will not know whether what he has been using is right or wrong. The trucks have extra tools which we did not have in the hospital workshops," Eng. Mary Musoke, the head of regional medical equipment maintenance workshop, said. He made the remarks during the handover of two mobile workshop trucks to the directors of Masaka and Jinja hospitals.

The trucks were procured with support from the Uganda Health Systems Strengthening Project (UHSSP) which has been implemented by the Ministry of Health with funding from the World Bank.

The objective of UHSSP is to deliver the Uganda minimum healthcare package to Ugandans, with a focus on maternal health and family planning.

Musoke said: "The X-ray machine at Kamuli Hospital



Dr Atwine

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Health facilities, especially the health centres have had challenges in the maintenance of equipment due to limited funds for repair

has been non-functional for 10 years, while the ultra-sound machine also needs repair. With arrival of the trucks we shall fix them."

Musoke added that although the maintenance of medical equipment has been going on the capacity was low. She added that health facilities have been lacking engineers to repair the equipment, but with decentralisation at the health ministry, human resource had been recruited to cover Busoga

region to reduce the down time of the equipment.

Some of the equipment which need repairs include patient monitors, anaesthesia machines and theatre equipment.

The permanent secretary at the health ministry, Dr Diana Atwine, said: "The trucks have been procured to help improve the efficiency of the regional medical equipment workshops.

Biomedical engineers are expected to move to all health facilities within their respective catchment areas to provide preventive and corrective maintenance of medical equipment."

Atwine appealed to engineers not to misuse the trucks, adding that they must have annual inventory updates of the tools used. She added that two other mobile workshop trucks were distributed to Moroto and Mubende hospitals. Ten other hospitals will also receive such trucks soon.

The director of Masaka Hospital, Dr Nathan Onyachi, said the hospital has been facing the challenge of repairing medical equipment and yet they have a mandate to maintain the machines at the lower health facilities.

Dr Onyachi revealed that they have been getting sh60m annually for the maintenance of the equipment, but the money was not enough, adding that repairing one machine could cost sh20m.