

BY ISMAIL BATEGEKA

Government has earmarked Shs58 billion in the newly approved 2026/2027 budget for Masindi District for the long-delayed refurbishment of Masindi General Hospital, a move expected to ease congestion and improve service delivery at the facility.

The Masindi District Council on Wednesday approved a Shs99 billion budget for the 2026/2027 financial year, with more than half of the funds earmarked for the long-awaited refurbishment of Masindi General Hospital.

During a district council sitting, Ms Pamela Nyakato, the secretary for finance, explained that the district had initially projected a budget of Shs35.4 billion.

However, she said the figure later rose to Shs99 billion, following supplementary allocations from the central government through the second budget call circular.

According to Ms Nyakato, Shs58 billion of the total budget has been allocated to the refurbishment and construction works at Masindi General Hospital.

Govt earmarks Shs58 billion for Masindi hospital

The funds will support major renovation of old structures, expansion of infrastructure, and improvement of healthcare facilities at the hospital, which serves more than 300,000 people in the district.

Constructed in 1920, the hospital has for years struggled with congestion, inadequate space, and deteriorating infrastructure.

In 2022, Parliament's health committee assessed the facility and recommended urgent refurbishment and construction of new structures after local leaders raised concerns over its poor condition.

The government in 2022 had earlier earmarked about Shs50 billion for the project, including Shs30 billion for civil works and Shs18 billion for medical equipment procurement.

However, the project faced repeated delays despite earlier promises that the works would commence during the 2023/2024 financial year.

Early this year, the UPDF engineering brigade started the construction of

Masindi Hospital staff quarters.

Mr Cosmas Byaruhanga, the Masindi District chairperson, said the increased allocation reflects additional support from the central government and is expected to strengthen healthcare, tourism, and overall service delivery in the district.

"This is one of the biggest achievements Masindi has received in recent years. The allocation of Shs58 billion for Masindi General Hospital will greatly improve health services and reduce

the burden our people have been facing while seeking treatment," Mr Byaruhanga said.

He explained that for a long time, residents have complained about congestion, limited space, and inadequate facilities.

"The funding gives us hope that the district is finally moving toward having a modern hospital that can serve our growing population," he said.

District leaders believe the refurbishment of the hospital will greatly improve access to quality healthcare, reduce congestion in wards, create more space for patients and medical workers, and enhance medical service delivery across the district.

The district also allocated Shs81.1 million under the health sector conditional grant for development, further demonstrating the district's commitment to improving healthcare services.

Speaking about the allocation, the district secretary for health, Mr Augustus Bigirwenkya, said the investment could transform healthcare delivery if imple-

mented effectively.

"The huge allocation towards Masindi General Hospital will significantly improve healthcare delivery if implemented. The growing allocation towards health and tourism highlights the district's plans to position itself as a tourism hub due to its strategic location near Murchison Falls National Park and historical sites in Bunyoro," he said.

Optimism

Ms Aisha Nakamya, a member of the Masindi Hospital Management Committee, said the increased funding would address some of the long-standing challenges affecting healthcare workers and patients.

One of the residents, James Byenkya, a boda boda rider in Masindi Town, welcomed the government's decision to prioritise healthcare.

"Many people in Masindi spend a lot of money travelling to bigger hospitals in Hoima or Kampala. If this hospital is improved, it will reduce costs and save lives," Mr Byenkya said.

ALLOCATION

Apart from healthcare, Shs525 million has been allocated towards tourism development, Shs100 million for a new planning grant, Shs201.9 million for pension and gratuity payments, and Shs166.3 million to clear salary arrears.