

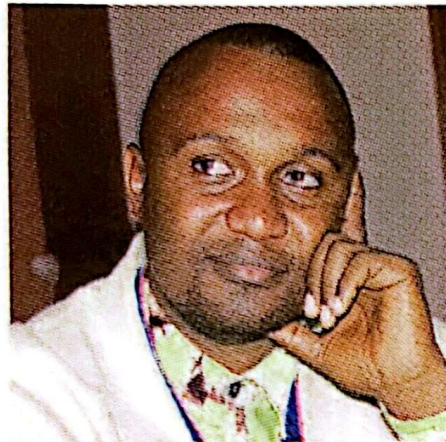
Mulago to charge doctors, nurses rent

BY VIOLET NABATANZI

WHILE health workers are still bargaining for a pay raise, Mulago National Referral Hospital is to make doctors and nurses pay partly for their rent.

The hospital's executive director, Dr Baterana Byarugaba, said plans were underway to construct 5,000 housing units for health workers at Mulago.

He said the housing units would accommodate all doctors, nurses at Mulago, Uganda Cancer Institute and Uganda Heart Institute. "We want each health worker to pay a monthly rent fee of sh150,000. This is far little compared to what is on the open market which is sh700,000," he said.



Dr Ekwaro Obuku

He said the units would also house 100 medical interns and 300 senior house officers. He said currently, the health facility has about 3,075 health workers.

Byarugaba said the units would have a sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and a washroom. He said land is available, adding that the units would be built under a public-private partnership

arrangement.

Meanwhile, the construction of 100 staff houses at Mulago has been completed and are expected to be commissioned before the end of year.

■ **UMA SPEAKS OUT**

The president of Uganda Medical Association, Dr Ekwaro Obuku, said the proposed monthly rent charges are too high for nurses and midwives as well as other lower cadres.

"A nurse getting a monthly pay of sh600,000 will find it difficult to pay sh150,000. I'm suggesting that the rent fee should not exceed sh30,000 and this should be strictly for maintenance," Obuku said.

"These houses are for health workers and should be managed by themselves with organised groups. Housing

should be a benefit as part of the salary," Obuku added.

Usher Wilson Owere, the chairman general of National Organisation of Trade Unions, said medical workers should not pay anything like accommodation, food, uniforms and all other things that help them do their work.

"We are struggling to ensure that medics get a pay rise, but the money might end up in paying taxes," Owere said. However he advised health workers to form co-operative society and pool resources together and lend to each other.

■ **STRIKE**

Doctors under their umbrella body, UMA, went on strike last year, demanding better pay, improvement in their working conditions and better facilities.