

# New maternal and fertility hospital to open next year

By Juliet Waiswa

Construction of a specialised maternal and fertility unit in Mulago will be complete by May next year, the state minister for health, Sarah Opendi, has revealed.

Opendi explained that once complete, the Government will not endorse funds for maternal service deliveries for civil servants abroad, saying the hospital has all the facilities for VIPs and VVIPs.

Close to sh30b is spent annually on deliveries abroad.

The minister was on Friday briefing a delegation from Family Board of Merck Foundation, whom she accompanied to Mulago to inspect the new facility.

The foundation team was led by Prof. Dr Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp, the chairperson of the executive board

The facility, according to Opendi, is intended to decongest the main hospital and reduce maternal and newborn deaths in the country.

On average, Mulago Hospital carries out 33,000 deliveries annually.

The facility, the first of its kind in East Africa and in the sub-Saharan, is a public facility.

The new facility, according to the director, Dr Byarugaba Batera, will have 450 beds when complete. It will also have a 60-bed unit for the private wing.

Batera explained that the Government is to spend \$33m, on construction works, adding that



Opendi (right) talks to Merck officials Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp (left) and Rasha Kelej during a visit to Mulago Maternal and Women Fertility Hospital. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

more funding is needed for the health workers and other facilities which will be required.

The construction works are being carried out by the Arab Contractors and being supervised by Joadah Consult Ltd.

During a guided tour of the complex, Batera explained that

for couples that cannot make babies, the facility will be able to offer them sperms after they have agreed with the hospital.

Currently, part of the 250 health workers who will be deployed at the facility are undergoing training.

Prof. Dr. Stangenberg-Haverkamp said his organisation

is in Tororo district to assist infertile women who are stigmatised.

"We are already working with infertile women in Tororo district, to ensure that they are not stigmatised. This hospital will save women who are faced with the same problem," Stangenberg-Haverkamp explained.