

60% Ugandans can't get quality healthcare - report

Objective. The survey sought to determine citizens' daily experiences when accessing social services.

BY PATIENCE AHIMBISIBWE

pahimbisibwe@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. A new study shows that six in every 10 Ugandans cannot access good services at health centres due to unavailability of medicine and neglect by medical staff.

The findings from Sauti za Wananchi survey, a new initiative by Twaweza, which means voices of the people, also cites other big challenges as patients sleeping on the floor at the health facilities.

The survey, which was conducted between August and September, was intended to determine citizens' daily experiences when accessing social services such as education, health, agriculture, water and transport in order to inform policy makers improve service delivery to the common person. A total of 2,000 people were sampled.

The scores

Ms Marie Nyanzi, the Twaweza programme officer, said poor health services scored 59 per cent mentions, followed by high cost of living at 38 per cent and lack of employment that registered 33 per cent. Poor transport services and hunger each scored 30 per cent while people tired of corrupt leaders scored 26 per cent.

"Many people mentioned health to be the country's top



Findings. FIDA Uganda chief executive officer Irene Ovonji-Odida and Ms Violet Alinda from Twaweza at the release of the Sauti za Wananchi survey in Kampala yesterday. PHOTO BY PATIENCE AHIMBISIBWE

problem. This survey was done before the doctors' strike; so you can imagine. The citizens also say the government is doing a bad job in controlling inflation, creating jobs and fighting corruption," Ms Nyanzi said yesterday while presenting the findings.

Other challenges frequently mentioned were poor quality education, poor access to clean water, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, land and property issues, crime, tribalism, constitutional implementation, and terrorism.

The chief guest, Ms Irene Ovonji-Odida, the chief executive officer of the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Uganda), warned Twaweza

to be careful with how they use their data as "government is sensitive and is increasingly shrinking space for civil societies" and those they deem to be opposing their stay in power.

"There is shrinking space for NGOs and citizens. The ques-

tion is how do we use this data? If you look at the current situation with the age limit debate, how the GMO Bill was passed, the proposed land amendment Bill, all these are intended to shrink the citizens space for participation. There is a need to collaborate with other organisations in order to get good feedback," Ms Odida said.

BACKGROUND

Justification. Ms Goretti Nakabugo, the Uwezo country director, said Sauti za Wananchi was piloted in Tanzania five years back and was taken to Kenya last year before it was launched in Uganda yesterday.

Appeal

Mr James Muwonge, the director social and economic surveys at the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, welcomed the research findings but appealed to the various NGOs working on similar topics to harmonise their findings if they are to realise an impact.