

UHRC wants health service delivery treated as human right issue

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KAMPALA. The Uganda Human Right Commission (UHRC) is pushing to ensure that health service delivery is treated as a human rights issue.

The UHRC wants human rights-based approach to reduce on maternal mortality and promote increased access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information for all indiscriminately.

According to the Ministry of Health, maternal mortality has reduced from 438 deaths per 100,000 live births registered in the 2011 UDHS report to the current 336 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The UHRC commissioner, Mr Meddie Mulumba, said a human rights-based approach will make sure people's rights are put at the very centre of health policies and practices in the country.

He explained that human rights-based approaches would reduce maternal mortality rates and provide reproductive health information, including contraception use, pre-natal care, safe abortion and post-abortion care.

While opening a workshop on human rights-based approach for technical officers at UHCR, CSO and government ministries in Kampala yesterday, Mr Mulumba said women and girls should be involved in health decisions that affect their rights.

"It is imperative that stakeholders in the health sector in Uganda embrace the human rights-based approach to ensure that people are placed at the centre of health service delivery," Mr Mulumba said.

He said the objective of human rights-based approach should be the realisation of health rights for all rights holders irrespective of their status and that the holistic approach will ultimately enhance the realisation of rights to sexual and reproductive health and other associated rights.

The UNFPA representative in Uganda, Mr Alain Sibenaler, urged States to commit themselves to ensuring that all family planning programmes abide by human rights norms, ethical and professional standards.

He explained that the provision of contraceptive services must be free from coercion and discrimination, ensure informed decision making, respect privacy and confidentiality and respect dignity of all persons.

The Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, Dr Diana Atwine, when contacted for a comment, said the human rights-based approach identifies rights holders and their entitlements and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations.

"And as a ministry, this is what we are emphasising to promote and strengthen the capacities of both rights holders to make their claims and duty bearers to meet their obligations in health service delivery," she said.