

... commander is appointed under a rotational system from the troop-contributing countries which include

... role in championing peace and security on the African continent. "Yes, my discussions with the CDF on how to implement the strategic

... for example. We are engaging stakeholders to see that these issues are resolved," Ambassador Madeira said.

... than a decade ago

Sh9m bill delays Mulago cancer machine, says health minister

By Cecilia Okoth

The Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) had by last evening not yet assembled the long-awaited radiotherapy machine, which arrived in the country last week.

It means that the testing and launch will be delayed for some weeks, UCI sources at Mulago Hospital have revealed.

The snag affecting the release of the package at Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) warehouse arises from the delay in clearing of freight and inspection bills, according to the Ministry of Health.

According to Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health, a pending approval for the outstanding \$2,500 (about sh9m) is underway.

"The clearing of the bigger part of the machine is what we are currently handling. Otherwise, we should have it transported to the cancer institute before the day ends (today)," Aceng said, adding that the procedure has to be done under the guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a body that regulates use of nuclear and atomic energy.

The minister said the machine has two components, including the non-reactive part (the body of the equipment) and the reactive one

"The machine is not being held by URA because such equipment is tax-exempt." Kateshumbwa

which is the engine of the system.

Yesterday, the much-publicised Ministry of Health handover of the machine to UCI was a moment of anxiety as doctors and other stakeholders paced up and down the corridors, wondering what could have halted the transportation of their anticipated machine.

Explaining the hitch to journalists, Dr Jackson Orem, the executive director of UCI, said although they had arranged to receive the machine yesterday, the company that shipped the equipment wanted some payments made immediately. He added: "But payments take a process, which we are already handling. However, I want to clarify that the payments should have been made by the manufacturer of the machine, so what is happening



Orem showing the press the room where the cancer machine is to be installed at Mulago Hospital yesterday. Photo by Miriam Namutebi

is not our fault."

The radiotherapy machine was manufactured by a company known as UJP and shipped to Uganda by a shipping company, Ever Green, from the Czech Republic, through Mombasa port, under the guidance of IAEA.

Purchased at Euros 700,000 (about sh2.94b) by both the Government and IAEA, the assembling of the new

machine was set to commence this week, to bring relief to patients who had braved tedious and expensive journeys for treatment abroad.

Radiotherapy services at the institute were expected to resume by mid-September, after authorities at UCI said it would take the experts a month to assemble and test the machine.

In the absence of the radiotherapy machine, cancer patients were given

chemotherapy treatment, surgery and palliative care. Radiotherapy, though not meant for all cancer patients, is one of the treatments that uses high energy radiation to shrink tumours and kill cancer cells.

Uganda's only radiotherapy machine that was donated by China in 1995 broke down in April last year.

Following the crisis, Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, offered to work with the Ugandan Government to provide 400 'badly off' cancer patients with free treatment as a short-term intervention.

URA cleared machine

Dickson Kateshumbwa, the commissioner in charge of customs, yesterday explained: "The machine is not being held by URA because such equipment is tax-exempt. It is now up to the ministry or hospital to take the machine and install it. We understand that there are safety precautions that must be taken by the responsible agencies, but we do not have any claim on the machine because it has been released."

A release order by one Christine Boolyo, an officer at the URA customs and excise department, indicates that the radiotherapy machine was released on Tuesday this week, at 3:20pm.