

Strikes

Budget

Doctors

Public service

By Paul Kiwuwa

The Government has proposed at least sh1 trillion to cater for salary enhancement of public servants, the state minister of health for general Duties, Sarah Opendi, has revealed.

"The salary review committee report that was due to be released on November 30 will be presented to the cabinet this Saturday in a special meeting," Opendi told MPs on the health committee yesterday.

Later, the report will be sent to Parliament for debate and finally for approval, she added.

The minister explained that in the cabinet meeting, they will get to know the breakdown of the allocations as given to the various categories of public servants.

"The money is going to be considered in the next financial year, beginning with July 2018, to cater for the different categories of government workers," Opendi explained.

She was appearing before the committee to scrutinise the Mental Health Bill, 2014, which aims to repeal the Mental Treatment Act of 1964.

The object of the Bill is to provide for care and treatment of persons with mental illness at primary healthcare centres.

"The draft proposals for pay raises will cater for medical doctors, nurses and midwives, salaries for state attorneys and prosecutors, officials of the judiciary and related institutions, teachers, the armed forces, and others," Opendi said.

She explained that if the sh1 trillion is approved by the cabinet, the proposed enhancement has to be sustained each financial year.

"Over sh1 trillion cannot be raised in a supplementary budget by Parliament. It is the reason the proposed fund has to be allocated in a national budget," Opendi said.

Ntwetwe County MP Joel Ssebikaali asked the minister for the current wage bill of the public servants. Opendi responded by saying the

Govt proposes sh1 trillion for salary enhancement



Opendi (left) appearing before the health committee of Parliament yesterday. Photo by Miriam Namutebi

Government has been spending about sh200b, which it plans to enhance.

Ssebikaali said the Government's decision to increase the salaries of public workers will improve on the quality of the work force, such as doctors, nurses and midwives.

President Yoweri Museveni recently directed the setting up of a salary review commission to address the

discrepancies in salaries of civil servants.

The move followed public outcry over strikes by various groups of public servants, including medical doctors, which paralysed services in public institutions countrywide.

The doctors' strike lasted about two weeks last month.

The salary review committee was tasked by the Government with

conducting an across-the-board review of salaries for civil servants and it has proposed a significant raise for different categories of government workers.

The team was expected to hand its report to the cabinet by the end of last month.

Meanwhile, Dr Michael Bukonya, the committee's chairperson, asked Opendi to clarify on the Government's

Opendi says a report by the salary review committee will be presented to cabinet this weekend, before being sent to Parliament for debate

proposal to import 200 medical doctors from Cuba.

Opendi said there was no conclusive agreement by the Government to import medics from the Caribbean island nation, saying the matter has never been concluded.

She told the committee that "someone merely mooted the idea in cabinet when the medical doctors went on strike".

"Nothing has been discussed.

"As we speak now, we do not have anything concrete regarding the importation of the Cuban doctors," Opendi said.