

New health centre planned for Nakiwogo

By Evaline Namuwaya

Calvary Chapel Ministries in Entebbe, in partnership with Hope Restoration Ministries are to construct a sh500m health centre III at Nakiwogo landing site in Entebbe, in a bid to de-congest Entebbe's general hospital and the Virus Institute Clinic, the only government facilities in the area. The clinic is expected to be completed next year.

Stanley Namayilila, the chairperson of Division B Entebbe municipality, said this initiative will be a relief to the existing health facilities.

"We were actually planning to have a health centre in the area, but did not have funds. This is one of the highly populated areas in Entebbe with a population of over 25,000 and it has been hard to cover the health services in this area," he said.

He noted that many people have died due to lack of access to health from curable diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, and bilharzia.

"There is poor sanitation in the areas due to low latrine coverage. Prostitution is on the increase and most of the people have not access to medical care," he continued.

Annet Nalongo Balega, the secretary of health in Entebbe municipal council said, areas of Lugoonja and Nakiwogo, Luunyo in Division B in Kiwafu subward are highly populated and are not receiving enough social services from the Government. She said this at the ground breaking ceremony of new health centre in Entebbe recently.

"To have a new health centre will be a great relief to the community and the Government as well. Many people from the nearby islands do not have access to hospitals and medical care because we only have two public medical facilities, these are grade B hospital and Virus Institute Clinic which normally used for research," she said.

The health centre will also be able to serve people from nearby 11 islands of Lwamunyo, Buwaya, Zinga, Kyalwaazi, Kacyanga, Makusa, Buusi, Semalulu, Kifuufu, Nangyombe and Kalanga.

Robert Kiggundu, the executive director for Hope for Restoration Ministry, an organisation that does outreach medical camps and reaching out to single mothers and Girls living with HIV in the nearby islands said, when they go out for medical camps in the islands, many patients need to be referred, but when they reach government hospitals, they do get assistance yet they cannot afford private services.

Namayilila said the new facility will be a relief to the existing health facilities in the area

"We want to see that most the patients who need further attention are catered for by this health centre because we have medicine in most cases, but we have been distributing to government hospitals," he added.

He noted that the centre will have one doctor attached to it, two clinical officers and four nurses who will work in shifts. He also said the most prevalence diseases are HIV/AIDS, malaria, malnutrition and bilharzia.

Pastor Isaac Wabombo, the senior pastor at Calvary Chapel Ministries, said Nakiwogo being a landing site hosts many people, yet there is poor sanitation and there are many activities being carried out there.

"Many fishermen are HIV-positive, but have no access to medical care, bilharzia and malaria also at a high prevalent are around this place yet services cannot cater for all these. So, as a ministry, we believe that this facility will help reduce the disease burden since most of the services will be free or at a subsidised cost," he noted.

Wabombo asked the Government to partner with them to reach out to these communities by supplying some drugs where necessary, especially Antiretroviral Therapy.

Lydia Najjuma, a resident of Lugonjo, said the clinic will be a big relief to them because Grade Hospital is always congested while private clinics are too expensive for them.

"Can you imagine that I spend more than sh30,000 each time I get malaria or my child," she narrated.

Juma Luyima, an fisherman, living with HIV-positive, said many people in his condition are afraid to go for treatment because they believe the facilities are too far for them.

"HIV is rapidly spreading because many people have no access to drugs or fear going for HIV testing. Some are no longer afraid of having unprotected sex," he noted.