



commissioning of Entebbe general hospital last year. PHOTO BY PAUL ADJE

# Leaders stand in the way of Entebbe hospital takeover

**No way.** State House had moved to take over management of Entebbe Grade A hospital citing security reasons.

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**ENTEBBE.** Government has succumbed to pressure from Wakiso District leaders and dropped a proposal by State House to take over management of Entebbe Grade A Hospital, *Daily Monitor* has established.

According to Health Minister Dr Jane Aceng, government will instead merge both Entebbe Grade A and Grade B hospitals to form one regional referral hospital.

"It is true our negotiations have born fruits and the controversy surrounding the Entebbe Grade A Hospital is no more," Dr Aceng said in an interview on Tuesday.

"We have now resolved as government to merge both hospitals to

form one regional referral hospital with more specialists and improved services."

Dr Aceng said since the disagreement cropped up on the proposal to give away Entebbe Grade A to State House, her ministry undertook to study the population density of Wakiso District and discovered that the area requires a bigger health facility to cater for the rapidly growing population in the district.

"Currently, the population of Wakiso is estimated at 2.5m people and according to the Ministry of Health policy, once the population of a district or a region hits 2 million people, it means that there is need to elevate the existing facility in that area to a regional referral hospital," she said.

The minister revealed that once Entebbe Grade A is upgraded to a regional referral hospital, it will be under the Ministry of Health, but supervised by Wakiso district and there will be a board made up of only people from Wakiso District with one

## KEY ISSUE

Health Minister Dr Jane Aceng says government will instead merge both Entebbe Grade A and Grade B hospitals to form one regional referral hospital.

representative from the ministry.

When government through the Ministry of Health first came up with a proposal to give away Entebbe Grade A hospital to State House, Wakiso leaders led by the district chairperson, Mr Matia Lwanga Bwanika, opposed the move, claiming the government had sinister plans to steal the four acre-piece of land on which the hospital sits.

However, government dismissed the claims as unfounded. Since then, there have been back-and-forth negotiations between district leaders and Ministry of Health officials to resolve the impasse.

Dr Aceng said government has tasked Wakiso District leadership to identify three health facilities in the district from which the ministry will choose one that will become a district hospital.

"We are leaving it to them to

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## briefly

### Uganda's debt rising

**ENTEBBE.** Mr Patrick Turnwebaze, the executive director of Uganda Debt Network, has said the country's debt is worryingly on the rise. "Our debt levels are rising again, we can debate about the reasons for that official statistics, say \$7b, some say \$9b, but as civil society, we put it to \$12b" he told journalists. Mr Turnwebaze made the remarks during the regional conference on debt in Eastern Africa in Entebbe recently. Prof Ezra Suruma, a senior presidential advisor on planning and economic development, said when the country borrows money to invest in the economy, such money is not profited because it is always embezzled by greedy government officials. [Paul Adje]

### Mengo starts training

**KAMPALA.** Buganda Kingdom has unveiled a programme to promote cultural and traditional education to Kabaka's subjects. According to N Kayiira Gajuule, the chairperson of clans head council, the programme will be rolled out on October 20 at Mpalace. "The current situation requires elders to offer counsel and guidance to youth and the general public in line with traditional requirements of the property of the deceased," he said. [James Kabengwa]

# Govt blocks Entebbe hospital takeover

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### Voices



"It is true our negotiations have born fruits and the controversy surrounding the Entebbe Grade A Hospital is no more." DR JANE ACENG, HEALTH MINISTER



"When we first received information that State House wanted to manage Entebbe Grade A Hospital, we thought they were targeting its vast prime land and even convert the facility into a First Family hospital. Of course, this meant that other people will not have access to the hospital for treatment. I am happy that we are now pulling in the same direction." STEPHEN MUFUWA, MUKONO DISTRICT VICE CHAIRPERSON

decide which health facility among those they have should become a district hospital and I am sure they will soon get back to us," she said.

When contacted, Mr Bwanika was upbeat about the development, saying the government had finally responded to their concerns and "took the right decision".

"When we first received information that State House wanted to manage Entebbe Grade A Hospital, we thought they were targeting its vast prime land and even convert the facility into a First Family hospital. Of course, this meant that other people will not have access to the hospital for treatment, something we had to oppose. I am happy that we are now pulling in the same direction," he said.

According to the draft MoU, which *Daily Monitor* has seen, State House had promised to renovate and promote staff integrity as well as equip the hospital with modern equipment.

The MoU would also allow Staff House staff access affordable treatment and care at the facility.

The agreement was supposed to be in force for five years and could be mutually extended by the partners in case of need.

Dr Robert Kagwire, the district health officer, said once both Entebbe Grade A and Grade B hospitals are merged and upgraded to a regional referral facility, it will cater for a bigger number of patients compared to what they are handling today.

"What our people should expect are the improved services. The hospital is going to get a facelift like it was done on Entebbe Grade B wing and I ask the entire Wakiso leadership to support the project," Dr Kagwire said.

# 6,000

NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT THE HOSPITAL SERVES FROM WAKISO, ISLANDS OF BUSSI, BUVUMA AND KALANGALA



Government through the Ministry of Health in 2012 tried to take over management of Entebbe Grade A hospital citing security reasons. since th