

...cause ultraviolet rays damage their skin and they can de-

... Sam Ochnogu, a resident of Mukono Municipality, whose daughter is living with albinism, said he is

speaking at Busoga square in Jinja. Among the demands is the provision of free sunscreen creams and other items, including glasses and

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# Ugandan firm to manufacture cancer drugs

**KAMPALA.** Cipla Quality Chemical Industries Limited (CQCIL) is considering manufacturing cancer drugs and relieve patients from the burden of high-cost imported chemotherapeutics.

Since its establishment in 2005, the local pharmaceutical firm has been manufacturing Anti-retroviral (ARVs), Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies (ACTs) and Hepatitis medicines to treat HIV/Aids, malaria and hepatitis.

Mr Emmanuel Katongole, the executive chairman of CQCIL, said the decision has been driven by the growing burden of the cancer disease in the country and the need to give a ray of hope to hundreds of cancer patients.

“CiplaQCIL, a local manufacturer

of lifesaving drugs is once again intent on partnering with the government of Uganda to increase access to cancer treatments,” Mr Katongole said during a corporate forum organised by the firm under the theme; “Building capacity to mitigate the burden of cancer in Uganda” on Tuesday.

He was, however, not specific on the timeline when the initiative intended to be implemented through a private-public partnership is scheduled to start.

## Statistics

Statistics from UCI in December last year indicate that the number of new cancer cases registered annually had shot up by 500, from 4,000

in 2016 to 4,500 in 2017. Currently, the institute treats about 48,500 patients.

Education minister Janet Museveni noted that government spends a lump sum of Shs4.5b on cancer drugs annually, but a significant portion of the money is lost through importation costs.

“We are pleased with the initiative for the supply improvement to provide cancer drugs as an intervention for these challenge...this will meet the needs of the demand in the region, including East Africa and Africa at large, improve cost efficiency and improve access to life efficiency medicines,” Ms Museveni said in a speech read by Dr Jane Aceng, the Health minister.

However, Prof Charles Olweny, the chairman Uganda Cancer Institute, warned that the cancer burden can best be managed by getting rid of tobacco smoking, which is the leading cause of most of the cancers.

“Most people only know tobacco as causing lung cancer but tobacco also causes throat cancer, bladder cancer and all sorts of diseases and, therefore, I would like to say if we are going to win the war against cancer, let us first of all win the war against tobacco,” Prof Olweny said.

In Uganda, cervical and breast are the leading prevalent cancers among women while prostate is the leading prevalent among men. Changing lifestyles, increased life expectancy and HIV/Aids are some of the factors.