KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
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MAK seek sh440b to build teaching hospital

By Hannington Mutabazi

Makerere University college of health sciences seeks over sh441b to build a teaching hospital to enhance training of students.

The principal of the college, Prof. Charles Ibingira, said the hospital will provide more facilities for students training and increase enrollment numbers annually.

This was revealed yesterday during the celebrations to mark the 30years of collaboration between Case Western Reserve University from Ohio in the US and Makerere University college of health sciences.

The hospital will be highly specialised with modern laboratories and spacious teaching facilities, offering training for students in different medical disciplines, according to the don.

"By having our own hospital, we shall be able to increase on doctor training, We shall also have more doctors in the country, solving the current 1:25,725 of doctor-to-patient ratio," he said.

Nawangwe (left) gives a gift to Snyder during the celebration to mark 30 years of partnership between the two institutions at the Makerere university college of health sciences in Mulago on yesterday. Photo by Timothy Murungi

Hospital benefits

Ibingira said according to studies, the enrollment of students will increase from the traditional 50 to 300 students pursuing undergraduate degree courses, who will graduate every year.

He also revealed that there will be an increase in specialised training since they will be able to admit more people for specialised training from the current 25% who are admitted.

"Once we increase training, we shall reduce the gap in our hospitals at the district level, as well as regional referral hospitals," he explained.

Ibingira said Makerere has manpower to train specialised doctors since they have over 300 specialist doctors at the college and enroll over 300 doctors for masters and PhD training every year.

"We need this hospital in order to train more experts who can provide specialised care so that people can desist from flying abroad," he added.

He further explained that the hospital will also solve the problem of brain drain since most Ugandan doctors go abroad in search for greener pastures.

A study shows that out of 5000 qualified doctors in the country, only 1,200 work in the public sector. The rest are abroad looking for greener pastures.

The university vice-chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, appealed to the Government to give the necessary support to the university to reach its goal of building a teaching hospital.

He added that the university and the country will benefit from the move since there will be increased enrollment of students pursuing medicine, which, at the end of the day, will increase the number of doctors in the country.

"It should be a priority for Government because this will solve the crisis of doctors and also promote specialised research at the college of health sciences," he said

The Government has already provided the university with 80 hectares of land to build the teaching hospital at Katalemwa in Wakiso district

Ibingira revealed that President Yoweri Museveni bought the idea of constructing a teaching hospital and also pledged to help the university acquire a loan to start construction.

Ibingira, who appreciates the support of the President, said they are still far from starting any works because there is a lot of bureaucracy involved.

"We have to first meet the university council to give us a go ahead. We shall also have to meet the education ministry to approve and finally meet the financial development committee, who will approve the loan," he said.

Ibingira also revealed that they are also partnering with the Polish government, which is willing to support them as long as the process is completed.

Collaboration

Through the collaboration of Makerere and Case Western Reserve University, Makerere has become a giant in biomedical research and training.

The collaboration also helped the country in fighting and combating HIV, as well as management and prevention of tuberculosis.

During the celebration, it was revealed that Case Western Reserve University has invested over $200m (sh740b) during their 30-year collaboration. They have also trained over 100 Ugandan doctors in the US.

Barbara Snyder, the president of Case Western Reserve University, was happy with the extraordinary welcome at the university.

She said they are looking forward to collaborating with other colleges of the university, such as the college of Engineering and the school of law.

BETWEEN THE LINES

The principal of the college, Prof. Charles Ibingira, said the teaching hospital will provide more facilities for student training and increase enrollment numbers annually.