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***For Immediate Release***

**Are Mobile Hospitals the Right Way to go? Questions CSPR**

Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) has challenged the government to focus resources on addressing bottlenecks facing the health sector in delivering rural health care services before thinking of the proposed mobile hospitals.

A mid-term evaluation of the Firth National Development Plan (FNDP) by CSPR found that the non availability of essential drugs and a crisis of inadequate medical staff were serious concerns observed. The study showed that despite improved access to health care services for vulnerable communities, most health facilities had inadequate supply of drugs and other medical supplies. Needless to say, all grave consequences of inefficiencies in the health sector are borne by the poor. The majority of rural residents continue to suffer diminished access to health care services and their plight to good health has seemingly been ignored.

Therefore, CSPR suggests that government should sharpen its focus for the remaining FNDP timeframe to enhancing the quality of health care service delivery by recruiting additional medical personnel and replenishing the much needed medical supplies. Additional resources are required to support training of health workers in specialised fields. It also was generally revealed in almost all the sites visited by that CSPR that funds allocated to the health sector were not only inadequate but more so that disbursement of resources was protracted.

We, at CSPR, do not approve of the proposed mobile hospitals as a solution to the challenges prevailing in the delivery of health care services to poor people particularly those in rural areas. The proposal of mobile hospital does only seem to be expensive but also unsustainable which may end up being a waste of tax payer's money.

We call upon government to critically use a balancing act to analyse gains and losses of such a venture in medium and long term. Conditionalities that come with such aid as their potential of eroding gains scored should be clearly assessed. The proposed mobile hospitals

may reverse the development in the health sector in the sense that concentration may be tilted towards new but non viable projects that are short lived as opposed to traditional hospitals and clinics.

At present, there appears to be no clear indication that resources are being directed towards priority areas of the sector as identified in the FNDP. We therefore recommend that government should put in place better coordination of sector resources towards improving supply of medical drugs and rehabilitating and constructing health infrastructure among others.

While we applaud Government for making great commitment to alleviate some of the hardships in the health sector particularly as regards infrastructure development and recruitment of medical personnel, there are clear unpleasant and chronic conditions in the sector that Government needs to pay attention to if it is to achieve quality service delivery in the health sector.

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