

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH,  
GENERAL DUTIES, ON AVAILABILITY OF POLIO VACCINES  
IN THE COUNTRY,**

**Rt. Hon Speaker and Colleagues,**

Hon. Akampulira Prossy Woman MP, Rubanda district raised the issue that she had taken her baby for vaccination against polio at Nakasero Hospital and was informed that the vaccines were out of stock. She then took the child to another facility within Kampala and found the same challenge. She also indicated that other clinics within Kampala too had stock outs.

Rt. Hon Speaker, we have enough vaccines at the National Medical stores and the last deliveries of the vaccines to facilities across the country was in June. Vaccines are delivered monthly at the beginning of the month to districts by the National Medical stores. However beginning this financial July, NMS could not deliver the vaccines because of the new directive from the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, in a ***Letter ISS.60/256/04 dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury,*** wrote to NMS informing them that effective FY 2018/19, NMS was to operate as an Ministries Departments & Agencies. The

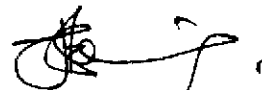


implication of this is that NMS must wait for funds to be sent to their account by the MOFPED.

Whereas NMS has funds on its accounts at Standard Chartered Bank, Stanbic Bank including Bank of Uganda, the Accountant General, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018, directed NMS that payments can only be made on Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and thus cannot be made from these Accounts!

Rt. Hon Speaker, the NMS cannot operate as an MDA and effectively deliver on its mandate which is to efficiently procure medicines and other medical supplies, and distribute them to health facilities across the country. NMS Operations are Supply Chain Operations and any delays in availability of funds will grind the system to a halt, resulting in the stock outs of Essential Medicines and other Health Supplies (EMHS), which negatively affects service delivery. The NMS was created by an Act of parliament, the PERD Act and is supposed to operate as an autonomous Institution.

Rt. Hon Speaker, for the Supply Chain of EMHS to run smoothly there must be an uninterrupted flow of resources, especially funds. The system imposed on NMS by MoFPED does not allow for flexibilities. The current stock out of Polio Vaccines, was foreseen



to happen with the new system and was brought to the attention of MOFPED. NMS must now first wait for MoFPED to release funds, which will then be used to procure fuel for medicine trucks, truck drivers allowances and provide other transport logistics.

Rt. Hon Speaker, as I mentioned before, we anticipated this situation, and explained it to MoFPED but the Ministry did not appreciate the unique processes of NMS. We also appeared before the Health Committee of Parliament, while it was scrutinizing the Ministerial Policy Statement of the Health Sector, and explained the implications of implementing the directive of the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury. The Committee appreciated the negative effects **and agreed that the Status Quo of NMS financial Operations should be maintained until an evaluation was done by Parliament.** This position was recommended to Parliament in the ***“Report of the Sectoral Committee on Health on the Sector Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the FY 2018/19” of May 2018***, specifically on Page 29 thereof. The Report and the Recommendations were adopted by **the Parliament of Uganda sitting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, while approving the budget of the Health Sector.**

Page 52 of the day's Hansard refers.

Rt. Hon Speaker, the effect of the decision of Parliament was that NMS should remain operating as it had been since the



creation of its vote in the FY 2009/10. After the position taken by the Parliament of Uganda, it was expected that the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury would comply and reverse his earlier directives. To date, no such reversal has been made. On the contrary, the **letter AGO 45/295/01 dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 from the Accountant General**, reaffirmed the earlier directive of the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury, in total defiance of the decision of Parliament referred to above.

Rt. Hon Speaker, NMS has had to comply with the directive of the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury and Accountant General, but it is expected that the situation will get worse as we move along. **The Development Partners such as USAID, UNICEF and others, that deliver commodities to NMS, and support NMS with service charge to deliver these items to health facilities, in principle, will not pay the service charge in the Consolidated Fund.** The partners as a matter of principle have been working directly with entities like, NMS. In the current situation, NMS is unable to accept commodities/medicines from these Partners for Warehousing and Distribution, hence an anticipated stock out of these commodities/medicines. These service charges are not part of the appropriation by Parliament and therefore, in the new arrangement, NMS cannot receive such funds and spend them for delivering of the medicines.



Rt. Hon. Speaker, we have engaged the Ministry of Finance on this matter as seen from the letter to the Accountant General from the General Manager, NMS dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and another dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Health. Hon. Jane Aceng Minister of Health has had a meeting with the PS/ST over the same in vain.

Rt. Hon Speaker, in conclusion we have adequate quantities of polio vaccines in our stores. The challenge has been the new directive for NMS which has affected the operations of the NMS.

I beg to submit.



**Sarah Opendi**  
**Minister of State for Health, General Duties**  
**17<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.**