

Ensure health facilities are easily accessible, PWDs tell govt

BY ALEX ASHABA

HOIMA. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) have appealed to the government to ensure that health facilities are easily accessible and their amenities are user-friendly to PWDs.

Speaking at the 38th advocacy commemoration in Hoima City on Friday last week, Ms Esther Kyoziira, the chief executive officer of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), said: "Access to health is a human

right, and when we talk about equality and equity, we emphasise equal access to quality health services for everyone. The communication gap between health workers and patients with disabilities remains one of the most serious challenges in the healthcare system."

She added: "We still struggle with the attitudes of some health workers who think persons with disabilities do not have equal rights when it comes to accessing health services...Some refuse to communicate with us simply because



Key challenges.
...some health workers ... think persons with disabilities do not have equal rights... Some refuse to communicate with us simply because we do not speak." - **Esther Kyoziira, the chief executive officer of NUDIPU**

we do not speak. Others fail to get information from us because they assume

we cannot hear or understand."

Ms Kyoziira further pointed to the growing number of PWDs in the country. "According to the most recent national census, 13.2 percent of Uganda's population are persons with disabilities. This is a significant proportion that cannot be ignored," she noted.

Ms Hashimu Mukama, the chairperson of Bunyoro People Living with Disabilities, said there is a need to protect patient privacy, particularly for individuals who have a hearing impairment and re-

quire sign language interpreters.

"Health workers should at least possess basic sign language skills as part of their training," she said.

The Hoima Resident City Commissioner, Mr Badru Mugabi, said the government and other stakeholders should ensure that an inclusive health system that leaves no person with disability behind.

editorial@ug.nationmedia.com