

The agreement is expected to provide resilient health systems in the country a foundation of economic opportunities.

BY TONNY ABET

The United States Ambassador to Uganda, Mr William Popp, has described a planned multi-year bilateral agreement between Uganda and the US government on health financing as a "positive change" ushering in a new approach to health assistance in line with America First Global Health strategy.

Popp made the remarks yesterday during the annual Joint Review Mission (JRM) for Uganda's health sector in Kampala. His speech was read by the Country Director for Centers for US Disease-Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr Mary Boyd.

In his speech, Popp highlighted two decades of collaboration that have driven a 20-year increase in life expectancy and near-perfect survival rates in recent Ebola outbreaks, and promised the US would do more.

"The new approach, through a multi-year bilateral agreement, will ensure the support we provide to the health sector is grounded in mutual respect, mutual prosperity of our nation and a national ownership right here in Uganda and we believe it will promote efficient and country-driven systems," he said.

"As you know, resilient health systems are the foundation of economic opportunity, private investment and long-term stability and this will in turn... strengthen domestic co-investment," he added.

Describing the US as "Uganda's biggest ally," Popp pointed to milestones including viral load suppression for more than a million HIV/Aids patients, who are now living healthy and productive lives.

He also highlighted a nearly 50 percent drop in maternal deaths over the past decade, and "100 percent survival of every diagnosed Ebola patient during the 2025 Ebola outbreak."

US envoy speaks out on Uganda-US health pact



US Ambassador to Uganda William Popp (right) speaks to press in Kampala in April 2025. PHOTO/ISAAC KASAMANI

"Our collective efforts have helped to improve diagnostic capacity, to train health workers, to strengthen disease surveillance, reinforce supply chains and advance digital health and data systems, saving lives here in Uganda and in turn helping to keep the US and the global world safer," Popp declared.

He also said the US government will continue to work through integrated healthcare system to support regional referral hospitals as they offer integrated health services, including HIV/Aids.

"We also remain dedicated to strength-

ening the laboratory networks, supply chain resilience, digital health integration, and the health workforce at facility and community level," he added.

Central to the new approach is scaling Uganda's community health workforce. The US has already partnered with the Ministry of Health to train more than 1,000 Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWS). "This is only the beginning. Together with Village Health teams, CHEWS play an essential role in disease surveillance, epidemic control and community-level service delivery," Popp said. He urged regional and district leaders to prioritise retention and expansion of this cadre as Uganda assumes greater stewardship.

Digital health platforms, a cornerstone of the emerging pact, will enable faster data exchange to enhance epidemic preparedness, a priority for both nations given cross-border disease risks.

Dr Diana Atwine, the Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, confirmed that negotiations remain active.

"We will be able to let you know [the date this will be signed]. We are still dis-

FINANCE GAP

The Health minister, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, says the country has increased population life expectancy, reduced maternal deaths and improved infrastructure. She, however, said there is a decline in donor support. "Major challenges remain in human resource for health, with only 34 percent of the structure filled..." she said.

cussing it. We are still looking at the terms and negotiating," she told *Daily Monitor*.

Dr Atwine, however, declined to specify agreed clauses but stressed that data governance, funding modalities, and intellectual property safeguards are under close review to protect Ugandan sovereignty.

Uganda, according to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding, will be able to build a "durable and resilient health system," due to funding and human resource support provided by the US government as per the agreement.

In turn, the US, through this agreement, will manage to curb global health threats and reduce the burden of common diseases like HIV/Aids, malaria, and Tuberculosis in the countries of interest like Uganda. Both parties celebrate gains.

But legal and data safety experts are concerned by the clause in the draft agreement that requires Uganda to share its valuable health data with the US for the next 25 years. They highlight issues around data privacy, sovereignty, and legal clashes.

The talks occur against a backdrop of global health financing reforms. Uganda, which receives a big portion of its HIV/Aids budget from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, seeks greater predictability amid fluctuating congressional appropriations.