

South Korea earmarks sh719b towards cancer treatment

By Francis Emorut

The government of South Korea has earmarked \$20m (about sh719b) for the treatment of cancer.

The revelation was made by the country director of the Korean Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH), Dohoon Kim, during the first project management committee meeting for the national cancer management and capacity building project in Uganda that was held at Golden Tulip Hotel in Kampala recently.

Kim explained that the project would last five years, scaled up for phase II after the pilot project that was for two years (2023-2025).

"We are submitting a proposal for \$20m for five years to the KOFIH headquarters in April this year," Kim told experts from the Ministry of

Health and Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI).

Kim informed the audience that the project was initially launched in 2013 and was designed to strengthen Uganda's national cancer management system in alignment with Uganda's National Development Plan III.

He said it focuses on strengthening governance, improving cervical cancer prevention plus treatment systems, modernising infrastructure as well as enhancing the capacity of health professionals.

The KOFIH country director appealed to the stakeholders in the Ministry of Health and UCI to act and show the performance of the pilot programme. Kim noted that cancer control is not achieved through equipment alone. "It requires policy leadership, system design, trained professionals, community engagement,



Dohoon Kim

and continuous monitoring. KOFIH remains fully committed to co-operating on this journey together with mutual respect, shared ownership, and accountability," he said.

The KOFIH country director commended the Ministry of Health and UCI, especially the frontline health workers in Kampala and Mbarara, the National Cancer Centre of Korea and

all partners who have contributed to the progress of the project. Kim informed officials that South Korean technology with Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted cervical cancer screening devices has been introduced to be adopted in Uganda to provide digitalised and more accurate service to the women who come for screening.

He told participants that in April 2025, his organisation conducted joint monitoring with the Ministry of Health's Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) department and UCI, reinforcing the organisation's shared accountability from July to August last year.

Kim added that KOFIH successfully organised a high-level invitation programme with the Republic of Korea, which has welcomed eight senior officials, including the health ministry permanent secretary, Dr Diana Atwine

and UCI executive director Dr Jackson Orem to his country.

He noted that during that visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed between KOFIH, the National Cancer Centre of Korea, Uganda's Ministry of Health and UCI, which is aimed at institutionalising a strengthened partnership.

On his part, Orem welcomed the initiative for phase II funding, saying it will go a long way in cancer prevention and management.

"This will improve access to cancer services countrywide," Orem said.

The director of public health at the health ministry, Dr Daniel Kyabayinze, commended KOFIH for providing AI equipment that will scale up screening and early detection of cancer. He appealed to parents to take their children aged 9-12 for human papillomavirus screening.