

New Vision

## Health ministry recovers sh1b Global Fund money

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October 21, 2010

THE health ministry yesterday released a new list of individuals and institutions that have refunded the Global Fund money.

According to the list of recoveries submitted to the public accounts committee yesterday by the ministry's accounting officer, Kyambadde Ssenyongo, sh1b has been recovered of the sh3b misappropriated.

The funds were meant to fight malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

However, the figure is contrary to a recent revelation by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Richard Butera, that sh2.3b had been recovered by April and deposited at the Central Bank by individuals and institutions implicated in the scam.

"Recoveries are being made though the matter is before court. So far, sh1.1b has been recovered.

We have not got all the money, but some recoveries are being made through the DPP," he said.

Ssenyonga was appearing before the committee to answer questions raised in the auditor general's report to parliament for the year 2008.

The report raised issues of unsupported expenditures, forged accountabilities, unaccounted for funds and questionable payments for travels.

The Global Fund scam was unearthed in 2005 by Pricewaterhousecoopers, an audit firm, leading to the suspension of the fund by donors.

President Yoweri Museveni appointed a judicial commission of inquiry to probe the allegations of misappropriation.

The commission, headed by Justice James Ogoola, unearthed various irregularities and implicated a number of people and NGOs, including the then three health ministers, Jim Muhwezi, Mike Mukula and Alex Kamugisha.

Ogoola called for further investigation, criminal prosecution and the refund of sh3b.

The committee, chaired by Nandala Mafabi, however, agreed to launch new investigations into the matter and directed the health ministry to submit names of individuals who obtained money through the institution.

"This is going to be a special issue for us. The public should know the people who eat money meant for people living with HIV," Mafabi said.

A number of officials have since been convicted over the misuse of the funds.

They include Teddy Seezi Cheeye, former director of economic monitoring in the Internal Security Organisation. He was convicted for misappropriating money allocated to his organisation, Uganda Centre for Accountability.

Cheeye was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and is supposed to refund sh110m of the sh120m advanced to his organisation.

Others are former director of programmes in the defunct Uganda Television, Salongo Kavuma, who was sentenced to five years imprisonment and is supposed to refund sh49m. Annaliza Mondon and Elizabeth Ngororano were also ordered to refund the money in addition to serving their prison sentences.

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