

7th April 2023

Press Release: World Health Day 2023

As we commemorate World Health Day 2023, it is crucial to reflect on the state of Uganda's public health system. This year's theme is "**Health for All,**" emphasizing the importance of ensuring equitable access to healthcare for everyone, regardless of their social or economic status.

The COVID19 pandemic showed how decades of extracting [profit](#) out of the healthcare system and low financing, have left it [unprepared](#) to timely deal with any health emergencies. Despite the fact that health is a fundamental human right and an accelerator for sustainable development, the national budget allocation to the health sub-program in the financial year 2023/2024 is low, standing at Ugx 4.179.2 billion compared to an earlier budget of Ugx 4.739.1 billion- a reduction by 11.8%. This reduction is concerning and will have severe consequences on Uganda's ability to provide equitable healthcare to all.

Furthermore, commercialisation of healthcare has created an environment where profiteering is the primary goal rather than people's lives. As ISER's research, [Profiteering off a Pandemic](#) reveals, such practices widen healthcare disparities. Also, unregulated private actors have contributed to a range of structural challenges, including the perpetuation of [unlawful detention of patients](#) for failure to pay medical bills.

In light of these issues, ISER recommends that the government must;

- prioritise the allocation of sufficient funds to strengthen the public health system, increase transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public funds in order to improve access to quality healthcare services,
- effectively and timely deliver essential medicines and medical supplies at all health facilities in order to reduce stock-outs,
- allocate adequate resources to implement its policy that seeks to recruit and retain [sign language interpreters](#) in general and regional referral hospitals; this policy should also be extended to private health facilities,
- regulate and play an oversight role towards private actors in the health sector to ensure these actors operate in a manner that promotes public health and well-being for all.

On this **#WorldHealthDay**, ISER pledges to continue advocating against commercialisation of health and demanding for strong quality health services across Uganda as pathways to realize **#HealthforAll**.