



Govt must invest more in family planning

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THE Government should invest more in family planning services if the country is to accelerate economic development, health minister Dr. Stephen Malinga has said.

He added that this would also reduce the maternal mortality rate, which stands at 435 deaths per 100,000 live births.

"Good health stimulates economic growth. Scaling up health will boost the economy," Malinga said.

He was recently addressing the international family planning conference at the Commonwealth Resort Hotel Munyonyo in Kampala.

The conference attracted over 1,300 participants including researchers, policy-makers and health workers from 59 countries.

Malinga said developing countries, including Uganda, faced constraints like a limited budget, high cost of health care and insufficient supply of medicines in meeting the millennium development goals.

"It will be difficult to attain economic growth if we do not check population growth and factors that fuel it," Malinga said.

He also expressed concern that condom use, which is one of the modern family planning tools available in Uganda, is unpopular because of cultural myths and social misconceptions.

Werner Haug, the UN Population Fund technical division director, said investment in contraceptives would lead to a reduction in public expenditure on the health sector in the long run.

He said globally, 200 million women wanted to use safe and effective family planning methods but lacked information and services or the support of their husbands and communities.

Haug added that an estimated 75 million women in developing countries had unwanted pregnancies every year, while about 20 million underwent unsafe abortions.

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