‘NO AFRICAN COUNTRY HAS MET THE ABUJA DECLARATION OF 15% BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR HEALTH CARE’

BY SELASI AKLOTSOE MENSAH

R. John Eliasu Mahama, a public health expert, has stated that no African country has met the 15% budgetary allocation for health care which was advocated for 20 years ago per the Abuja Declaration.

He said, “Africa 20 years ago came up with the Abuja Declaration which is to say that we will spend 15% of our national budget on health. No country on the continent has met that target.”

“We are currently doing around 8% of our national budget on health. So one of the advocacy is to work with the government and try to advocate for increment. Especially in the context we are, being a middle income country, donor funding is dwindling.”

Mr. Eliasu Mahama said this in an interview during the Media Training of the Ghana Training of Trainers on Domestic Health Financing, Universal Health Coverage and Budget Advocacy organised by HBC Promise Ghana. This training was part of a three (3) month project.

The Healthy Black Communities (HBC) Promised Ghana is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which recently organised a workshop in Accra to train media practitioners as part of the Ghana Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Project. The project is partly funded and supported by The Global Fund, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance and WACI Health.

The workshop began with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in July and will end in October 2021. According to Mr. Eliasu Mahama, there were three sessions for the CSO as the cohort of the national master trainers as an extension of what has been done at the national level.

In addition, Mr LaMonte Evans, the President/Executive Director of the HBC Promise Ghana, stressed on the need for Ghana to do well to expand the coverage of the Ghana Health Insurance scheme to more Ghanaians in order to ensure adequate Universal Health Coverage in Ghana.

“I think the two areas that we would love to see is of course, more Ghanaians enrolled in the national health insurance scheme, but also that the national health insurance scheme covers more services”, he said.

Mr. LaMonte Evans added that Ghana must ensure that it is not only addressing health problems and ailment but it is investing in preventative measure to promote the UHC project.

“... Also on health prevention and promotion, we don’t have to do curative health, if we can do prevention, and so we can stop a lot of the challenges that Ghana has around health if the focus shifted to prevention and promotion, as opposed to palliative and curative health”, Mr. LaMonte added.

It is believed that countries that are doing well in Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which is a part of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs), are countries that spend a better part of their budget funds generated locally to support this.

“Now what the evidence is showing is that, in countries that are doing well in Universal Health Coverage (UHC) are those that are spending a lot of domestic resources on health care” said Mr Eliasu Mahama.

In conclusion, the fundamental thing that the Universal Health Coverage project is seeking to do is work with the government to ensure that health spending by the government or from domestic sources is improved.