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PSA PROJECT NEWS

Upgrade Phokera Health Centre, chief urges govt

TONEX DAYO
PSA COMMUNITY JOURNALIST

Group village head Mnembe in Traditional Authority Mbenje in Nsanje has urged the government to upgrade Phokera Health Centre to a rural hospital.

He said this last Friday at a meeting organised by Mnembe Reflection Action Circle (RAC) under the Partnership for Social Accountability (PSA) Project to discuss challenges people in the area face.

The chief said: “Our challenges can be reduced dramatically if Phokera Health Centre is upgraded to a rural hospital.

“This will allow the facility to admit patients and offer services currently not available, thereby reducing referrals to Nsanje District Hospital.”

In her presentation earlier, Phokera Health Centre vice-secretary Margaret Bizada said lack of drugs, medical equipment and health workers are frustrating health service delivery in the area.

“At times, we are asked to pay for ambulance services. This is unacceptable,” she said.

Health surveillance assistant Jones Chinaghana, who attended



Some of the community leaders who attended the meeting

the meeting, referred the matter to Nsanje District Health Office spokesperson George Mbotwa.

In response, Mbotwa said it would not be easy to justify the upgrading of the facility due to its closeness to Kalembe Rural Hospital in the district.

He added: “To turn a health centre to a rural hospital, we look at its population and how far it is to the next rural or district hospital.

“As for Phokera, it may not be easy to justify that because it is close to Kalembe Rural Hospital.

“Of course, the argument would be that at Kalembe patients are required to pay; hence, the chief’s request.”

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PHOTOGRAPH: BRIGHT KUMWENDA



PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Said some maize went bad: Kawale

Mchinji households applaud govt

DASWELL KALOLO
PSA COMMUNITY JOURNALIST

Communities from Traditional Authority Mduwa in Mchinji District have applauded the government for giving them money to buy maize.

Government, through the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (Dodma), is giving out K50 000 to each needy household to buy maize.

While thanking the government for the initiative, a beneficiary Namaleta Salima urged the Chakwera administration to reopen Admarc markets to allow them access to affordable grain.

Another beneficiary Setilida Malizani agreed that the initiative can only bear fruit if the needy access affordable maize from Admarc.

She said: “At the moment, we are buying maize from vendors at K650 per kilogramme, which translates to K32 500 per 50kg bag which is expensive.

“This is why I want the government to reopen Admarc markets so that we can buy affordable grain.”

The call was also echoed by group village heads Kanyanda and Mkangala.

Coincidentally, Minister of Agriculture Sam Kawale told Parliament this week that 10 000 metric tonnes of Admarc maize worth K3 billion has gone bad.

In his National Address, President Lazarus Chakwera hinted that his administration will give out cash and food support to over 3.8 million Malawians in 847 241 households in all the three regions of the country.

According to Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, over 3.8 million people, representing 20 percent of the country’s population, are food insecure. ■

PHOTOGRAPH: BRIGHT KUMWENDA



A cross-section of the meeting

Ombudsman suggestion boxes disappear' at health centre

CHRISTOPHER THOM
PSA COMMUNITY JOURNALIST

As the government is working hard to improve health service delivery by introducing suggestion boxes in the country’s health facilities, some unscrupulous people are taking them away at Mbenje Health Centre in Nsanje District.

The centre’s health surveillance assistant Lewis Chongwe made the revelation at a meeting organised by Kanyama and Kaudzu Reflection Action Circles (RACs) under the Partnership for Social Accountability Alliance (PSA) Project in the district.

He said: “Some people take

the suggestion boxes away at night. In this manner, we have been losing people’s suggestions on how we can improve our services.

“This happened for some time until the ombudsman started taking the suggestion box home when knocking off.”

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences public health and epidemiology professor Adamson Muula referred the issue to the Office of the Ombudsman which introduced suggestion boxes in public health facilities in the country.

Ombudsman senior investigation officer Martha Kwengwere expressed deep shock with the trend.

She described it as the work of duty-bearers who do not want to be held accountable.

“It is regrettable to hear this. It appears duty-bearers do not want to account for their actions and inactions; hence, the removal of the suggestion box,” she said.

While confirming the incidents, Mbenje Health Centre medical assistant Mphatso Kasoso said the boxes are removed by fishermen.

“There is nothing sinister about it, only that some fishermen remove and use them to pack their fish.

“We now have a wooden one which we remove every day for safe custody,” he said. ■