

Hope as Aids fight gets Sh10bn boost

By MUCHEMI WACHIRA

Kenyans living with HIV and Aids now have hopes of prolonging their lives as the country is set to receive \$130 million (Sh10 billion) to fight the disease.

The money is a new grant from the Global Fund.

Public Health and Sanitation minister Beth Mugo said yesterday it will be used to buy antiretroviral drugs for patients living with HIV and Aids.

The minister said the grant agreement will be signed by a representative from the Global Fund and Finance ministry tomorrow.

Controversy

Mrs Mugo said the grant was a new kitty, which the Global Fund has provided to Kenya for its fight against HIV and Aids.

It is different from the Global Fund Round 8 and 9 the country has been receiving for use in its campaign against the scourge, she said.

This is the funding that recently sparked controversy after Kenya was accused of failure to account for Sh13 billion given under the programme, which is also meant to fight malaria and tuberculosis.

The new fund, Mrs Mugo said, will come in phases for a period of five years.

"It will scale up antiretro-

viral treatment and ensure that people already on treatment continue to receive their medicines uninterrupted," she added.

Mrs Mugo made the announcement at Mathare North Health Centre in Nairobi.

One of the most important features of the new grant, the minister explained, was that the Government would no longer be responsible for accounting for HIV and Aids-related activities by NGOs.

Recipient

With regard to the new kitty, Care International Kenya will be the principal recipient for NGOs, while Finance ministry will be the principal recipient for Government institutions.

Mrs Mugo had gone to the health centre to launch the HIV testing and counselling campaign for this year.

She was accompanied by the Special Programmes assistant minister, Mr Mohamed Ali, and the director of National Aids Control Council, Dr Alloys Orago.

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