

Brazzaville, Congo, August 20 (Infosplusgabon) - The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on Monday called on the Congolese authorities to increase the health budget to 15 per cent.

He was speaking in Brazzaville at a meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Isidore Mvouba.

The Congolese government currently allocates 12% of its budget to the financing of the health system. The WHO Director-General, who is in Brazzaville for the 69th meeting of the WHO Africa Region, hailed the move but wants the government to increase it to 15%, as recommended by the heads of state at the Abuja summit in Nigeria.

He sought the support of the National Assembly, which votes on budgets, for the government to allocate substantial financial resources to the health sector, in order to give it the opportunity to properly finance the health system, to enable all social strata to benefit from dignified primary health care.

"We are aware that the National Assembly plays an important role in health. With the speaker of this parliamentary chamber, we discussed the issue of raising the health budget. Congo currently spends 12% of its budget on health. This is a significant step forward, but we would

like the government to increase it to 15%, in line with the recommendations of the Abuja summit," Dr. Tédros said.

The WHO chief also proposed that tobacco tax be raised in order to limit its consumption in the country, as it is one of the sources of mortality. The funds generated by this tax, he said, will help fund health programmes.

Ethiopian-born and renowned malaria researcher Dr Tedros was elected WHO Director-General on 23 May 2017 in Geneva.

He is the first African to hold this position. Prior to this position, he held high responsibilities in his country, including Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

FIN/INFOSPLUSGABON/PPL/GABON2019

© Copyright Infosplusgabon