

PRESS RELEASE

FREE HEALTHCARE IN DANGER: GOVERNMENT CUTS HEALTH BUDGET FOR 2012

On the 19th of November the Minister for Finance and Economic Development delivered the 2012 Budget Speech to Parliament. We commend the Government for the swift completion of the budget process but at the same time this came with astonishing disappointment. Save the Children UK, World Vision, and the Budget Advocacy Network, were alarmed to find that the allocation to health is set to significantly decrease, from 11% of the total national budget in 2011, to 7.4% in 2012. This proposed cut to health in 2012 sheds doubt on whether the Government really intends to uphold its commitment to the Abuja Declaration, agreed in 2001, to allocate 15% of the total budget to health.

According to a recent study by Save the Children UK and the Budget Advocacy Network, apart from an increase in 2011, the percentage of the national budget directed to health has steadily decreased over the last few years, with the biggest cut set to happen in 2012. The reduction in funds for health in 2012 will have an extremely negative impact on health care within Sierra Leone, particularly with the pressure of sustaining the Free Health Care Initiative (FHCI), launched by Government in 2010, and goes directly against the Government's commitment to the Abuja Declaration.

As Parliament debates the 2012 Budget this week, we call on them to carefully consider the cut to health and the serious impact this will have on the public, particularly pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children under 5. As the international community continues to provide support to the Free Healthcare Initiative, so to must the Government do its part and increase the budget allocation to health.

We call on Parliament to seriously reconsider the proposed cut to the health budget for 2012.

Table 1. % of National Government Budget allocated to Health

Year	National Total Budget (Le'm)	Total Health Budget (Le'm)	% of National Budget
2007	744,239	68,939	9.3
2008	854,568	65,213	7.6
2009	941,174	74,721	7.9
2010	113,834	84,691	7.4
2011	1,371,167	150,988	11.0
2012	1,867,831	138,011	7.4

Note - All data is taken directly from the Budget Bureau, MoFED

Note - The total national budget calculations include Non-salary, non-interest, recurrent expenditure; Wages and salaries; Domestically funded development expenditure - it EXCLUDES Foreign Development.



Budget Advocacy Network

