

Rwanda's main referral hospital, the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK), will begin relocating to a new facility in Masaka in March, Finance Minister said Thursday, as construction on the site nears completion.

Finance and Economic Planning Minister Murangwa Yusuf told lawmakers that the Masaka hospital is 98% complete and that the move will occur in phases through September.

"This is a very large hospital, larger than the current CHUK," Murangwa said. "It requires more modern equipment and more staff than we had at CHUK."

The new facility will have more than 800 beds, compared with about 400 at the current CHUK campus, and will include advanced diagnostic and treatment equipment, officials said.



The project began in March 2023 and is being built by Chinese firm Shanghai Construction Group Co. Ltd. It is expected to cost about 85 billion Rwandan francs (roughly \$70 million), equivalent to 580 million yuan.

Murangwa said the move cannot happen all at once, so services will shift gradually. Emergency care and trauma services, among others, will remain at the existing CHUK location for a period to avoid disrupting urgent medical care.

"There are services that will stay here for a while, such as maternity care," Murangwa said. "But eventually they will all move."

The new hospital has been designed with environmental sustainability in mind, using natural ventilation to reduce reliance on air conditioning. Each patient room includes an outdoor balcony for sunlight and fresh air, and the facility will have accessible routes for people with disabilities, as well as elevators connecting multiple floors.

The Masaka complex is located in a health-focused district that will also host the IRCAD Africa Hospital, a center planned to train surgeons in cancer procedures and robotic surgery.

Rwanda has been investing heavily in health infrastructure as part of its long-term goal of becoming a regional medical hub and reducing the number of citizens who

seek treatment abroad.

Murangwa said he expects the move to be complete by the end of the year, with all services operating from the Masaka facility.