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One in every three children malnourished, says report

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KAMPALA. One in every three children in Uganda is malnourished because they have no food to eat during school time across the country, a new report has revealed.

According to statistics from Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2014, Uganda has 55 per cent (about 19 million) children below 18 years, this means that about 6 million children in Uganda are malnourished.

The National Planning Authority (NPA) strategic review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 launched yesterday in Kampala, says about 646,000 of the children (34 per cent) in the country are chronically malnourished and underweight.

The report is a result of nearly 11-month survey commissioned by NPA with support from United Nations to assess Uganda's readiness to achieve sustainable development goal (SDG) two which advocates food security and improved nutrition (Zero hunger by 2030).

According to the report, public financing is insufficient to handle the problem and numerous uncoordinated small scale interventions are unsustainable.

While presenting the report, Dr John Ssekamate, the UPA population and social sector planning manager, said many Ugandans consume fewer calories than what they need every day.

"A large majority of school children enter class on empty stomach and only one in every three children gets to eat a meal at school and stunting rates over all stand at 29 per cent, according to the demographic health survey of 2016," Dr Ssekamate added.

Findings

The report says there is no national strategy currently to address children's feeding in schools, adding that this makes learning difficult.

It reveals that people are getting less out of farming due to climate change. The report finds show that shortage of food storage facilities in Uganda leaves the country with limited policy options to address sudden food shortages.

The report recommends establishing of an effective early warning systems, uprooting structural causes of hunger, expediting the school meals policy, educating people about nutrition and addressing food safety concerns in order to fulfill SDG two.