

DALOUM SAID STUNTING IN WEST NILE STANDS AT 33%, WHEREAS IN OTHER REGIONS, IT WAS BELOW 30%

## MOROTO

By Lawrence Mulondo

Karamoja sub-region has recorded a drop in stunted growth among children, from 45% to 35.2%.

Stunting is the impaired growth and development that children experience as a result of poor nutrition.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP) country director, El Khidir Daloum, the drop was mainly attributed to several interventions by the Government and development partners who introduced a nutrition drive and arable farming in the region, to encourage the Karimojong to grow their own food.

The news of the improvement came to light in the findings of a WFP research, which was conducted in 2016.

He made the remarks during the official handover of food worth \$5m from the government of China to WFP Uganda food aid project at WFP's central warehouses in Nalukolongo, Kampala on Friday.

He said stunting in West Nile currently stands at 33%, whereas in other regions in the country it is below 30%.

"Currently, the stunting average in Uganda is 27%. However, the accepted level worldwide is 15% and below," he said.

The country director said

# Karamoja: Stunted growth in children drops to 35%



Byabagambi, Ambassador Zhuqiang, Daloum and Ecweru arriving for the food donation to Karamoja in Nalukolongo, Kampala on Friday. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo.

under WFP Uganda's five-year plan that was launched this year, they are supporting the Government in various ways to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 and 17.

The state minister for relief and disaster preparedness, Musa Ecweru, said food scarcity is fuelled by climate change, adding that poor communities in

developing

## China intervention

In December last year, China implemented an emergency food aid project, where they

## THE DONATION

To reduce stunted growth in Karamoja to 25% and also to increase the enrolment and retention of children in schools, the Chinese government directly donated aid to WFP projects in Karamoja. The 10-month project, which kicked off in February, is expected to close in November.

According to WFP, part of the donation will help 130,000 school-going children in 290 primary and secondary schools have two meals a day under the school meals programme.

provided Uganda with 6,000 metric tonnes of rice.

The ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Uganda, Zheng Zhuqiang, said many people in several parts

of the country have suffered food shortage as a result of the severe drought due to El Nino. "Last year, I visited Karamoja and was touched by the poverty and backwardness of the area. Most children had dropped out of school and pregnant women were threatened by malnutrition," he said.

The envoy lauded the Government and WFP for the efforts they are putting into the project to feed people in Karamoja, adding that many malnourished women and children in the local area has received timely assistance.

"The schools have generally increased enrolment because of the implementation of the school meals programme," he said.

The Minister for Karamoja Affairs, John Byabagambi, said initially, the people in Karamoja were having two meals a day.

However, as a result of harsh conditions such as drought, they started having one meal a day.

"With the food donation and other interventions, we expect the proportion of school-going children to rise from 30% to 50%," Byabagambi said.

He added that the Government is currently having interventions in Karamoja to ensure that the people there can feed themselves. He cited the farming going on at Namalu Prisons in Nakapiripirit district.