

ATWINE SAYS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ARREST FAMILY HEADS WHO PRODUCE FOOD AND SELL IT ALL

By Chris Mugasha

Parents who produce and sell all the food leaving families to starve could be arrested if new bylaws are created at the request of the permanent secretary in the health ministry.

Dr Diana Atwine said it had become a habit for parents to sell food while the children became malnourished.

She, however, blamed this on the lack of bylaws on food security.

"In the past, there were tough bylaws on food security, whereby it was part and parcel of good governance. We need such laws back," she said.

Atwine was on Tuesday addressing the staff of Bushenyi district local government together with parents and teachers of Mbatamo Primary School during her visit to assess the impact of a Uganda multi-sectoral food and security nutrition project.

## 29% of children in Bushenyi are malnourished

Funded by the World Bank, the project is being implemented in 100 primary schools.

Under the project, the district production co-ordinator, David Beinomugisha, said the schools had been funded to establish demonstration gardens containing nutritious foods for pupils and parents to learn how one should feed. The move is aimed at fighting malnutrition in the district, which stands at 29%.

The Bushenyi district health officer, Dr Eldard Mwesigye, reported that some parents choose to sell the high quality nutritious foods which they produce and leave their families to

# PS wants law on food security



Atwine (right) admiring a fruit tree at Mbatamo Primary School in Bushenyi district recently. Photo by Chris Mugasha

feed on the rejects or remains.

"The food they leave at home is not energy-giving," Mwesigye said.

Atwine also wants local governments to enforce the revival of granaries in every home. "Ask family heads why they do not own granaries," she advised.

"It is unfortunate for districts such as

Rubirizi and Bushenyi to have cases of stunted growth despite the fertile soils which support food production," she said.

### Demonstration farms

Atwine asked officers in charge of health centres to establish demonstration gardens so that people

can learn from there. "Sometimes you don't need a lot of money to establish a small garden but it is about the brains and motivation," Atwine said after visiting Kyeizooba Health Centre, where she saw a model of the gardens.

The officer in charge of Kyeizooba Health Centre, Nancy Nyamweya,

said they use the gardens to sensitise patients, especially pregnant mothers, on how they should feed. She said the health ministry would soon issue a directive to all health workers/centres to have a theme for every month.

"This is aimed at preventing diseases instead of complaining of shortage of drugs all the time," Atwine said.