

Refugees, HIV patients to get fortified foods

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KAMPALA. Maama Care Foundation, a charity organisation in Uganda, has said it will start providing ready to eat food products to refugees, HIV/Aids patients, malnourished children and pregnant women as a way of promoting good health among them.

This comes after the Indian-established organisation yesterday unveiled a \$45m (Shs169b) food processing plant in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District.

The chairman of the Maama Care Foundation, Mr Harish Bhuptani, said the factory will buy Ugandan raw materials direct from farmers and process them into affordable fortified Ready To Eat (RTE) and Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) rich in vitamins and other nutrients.

Raw food products to be processed include maize, wheat, millet, soya, peanut, simsim, palm oil and sugarcane among others.

"When we came here, we came across poverty and malnutrition and our hearts changed. We realised that the Ministry of Health and donor agencies always talk about malnutrition without putting something on the plate. We now have the solution which will relieve the health sector," Mr Bhuptani said.

Appeal

Mr Bhuptani, however, asked President Museveni and the donor community to support his family's efforts to reach out to as many vulnerable people as possible.

President Museveni promised to support the charity organisation and also engage Mr Bhuptani to involve the commercial factor in his venture.

The President emphasized the need to process food for both charity and commercial purposes as the country loses a lot of money in unprocessed products.

"The processed foods come with all the nutrients and vitamins to build the body. He is doing it for charity, that is good but there is no harm in doing business too," the President said.

TO BENEFIT

Uganda hosts more than one million refugees who receive mostly unprocessed food products from the UN agencies and the Office of the Prime Minister. Refugee inflows from South Sudan and DRC to Uganda have put pressure on social services in border areas, with government officials