

NATIONAL NUTRITION FORUM



Pupils line up to receive food at lunch time. Nutrition standards remain poor in Uganda with experts warning that a stunted population translates into a stunted economy

Ugandans still unable to meet nutritional standard

By Jacky Achan

Following the inaugural National Nutrition Forum held in 2015, actors in the nutrition sector are set to again meet to take stock of how far the country has gone in the implementation of the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP), this time focusing on accelerating investment in the area. In November 2011, UNAP was launched with a focus on children and women of reproductive age to reduce under-nutrition.

It also focused on reducing the burden of care that malnourished children present to mothers.

The multi-sectoral strategy in addition, aimed to reduce the burden of under-nutrition in Uganda through production and distribution of therapeutic and supplementary foods to meet national and regional demand.

This would be through improving food production, quality control and supply chain management for

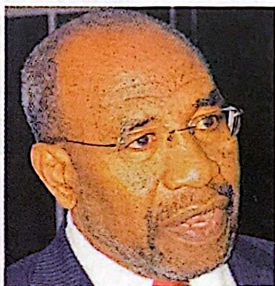


UN co-ordinator Rose Malango

the distribution of therapeutic and supplementary foods.

It would also provide livelihood empowerment of small-scale rural farmers, who will supply the raw materials for the production of therapeutic and supplementary foods.

This would be in addition to supporting households with vulnerable children in four selected districts. But overall, it would eliminate malnutrition (a condition



Premier Dr Ruhakana Rugunda

of the body caused by inadequate intake of nutrients both in terms of quality and quantity) by reducing poverty and enabling vulnerable households achieve sustainable food and livelihood security by 2017. This would be through community-level action.

Current nutrition status

According to the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, malnutrition still exists in both



OPM PS Christine Kintu

wealthy and poor households in Uganda.

This is an indication that more income at the household level does not always lead to better diets or health practices.

The survey found that more than two million children in Uganda are stunted. A figure unacceptable even though stunting decreased from 33% in 2011 to 29% in 2016.

Also, more than half of children under five years and one in every

three women were found to be anaemic, which percentage stands at 53%. But there were gains in overcoming vitamin deficiency in children under five. From over 30% in 2011, vitamin deficiency in children less than five dropped to 9% today.

A revised Economic Development and Nutrition Fact Sheet by the office of the Prime Minister compiled last year, warns that malnutrition has and will continue to slow Uganda's economic development.

This is in addition to anaemia, stunting and iodine deficiency disorders, all of which weakens Uganda's economy through losses in productivity.

The economy is also weakened due to poor physical status, less education as a result of impaired cognitive development resulting in lower wages and through increased health costs associated with treating malnutrition and related diseases.

The revised economic development and nutrition fact sheet 2017 stated that malnutrition reduces a person's ability to fight illness, increases severity of illness, drives up health