

# Embrace nutrition drive for a prosperous Uganda

**THE** nationwide 'Nutrition for All' campaign led by the Government, through the health ministry in partnership with UNICEF, could not have come at a more urgent time. With about two million Ugandan children chronically undernourished, this initiative is an investment in the country economically and socially.

While it may seem like just a brick in a long battle, it is the kind that strengthens the wall of national development.

Malnutrition is the absence of the right food. A plate might be full of posho or matooke, but empty of the essential proteins and micronutrients required to build a brain or an immune system. The causes in Uganda are many, including, poor dietary diversity, endemic "child ood poverty" affecting nearly 90% of young children, and entrenched feeding habits passed down through generations. As a result of this, 26% of our under-fives are stunted, their bodies and minds irrevocably shortchanged by a lack of nutrients during the crucial first 1,000 days of life.



## EDITORIAL

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A stunted child today is a student who struggles to concentrate tomorrow, and an adult whose physical productivity is capped in the fields and factories of the future. This, therefore, directly drains Uganda's human

capital. We cannot aspire to middle-income status with a workforce whose potential was diminished before they ever set foot in a classroom. This new drive is a game-changer because it shifts the paradigm from crisis management to prevention.

By targeting behaviour change at the household level and leveraging village health teams, it aims to dismantle the cultural and informational barriers that keep nutritious, locally available foods off the plate.

Well-nourished children are the non-negotiable blueprint for future prosperity because they will drive innovation, build businesses and lead communities.

To parents: A handful of greens or an egg added to the porridge will ensure your child is well-nourished.

To the leaders: Nutrition funding is not charity; it is the most cost-effective economic stimulus we have. The media and communities should, therefore, be at the forefront of amplifying the message that what we feed our children today determines the Uganda we wake up to in 2040.