



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**SPEECH BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AT THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF
THE REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY
CONTROL (QA/QC) FOR FLOUR
FORTIFICATION**

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
Kampala, Uganda, 23rd May 2016



Representatives from the Smarter Futures partnership,

Trainers from Ghent University, VLIR-UOS in Belgium and Makerere University

Participants from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique Rwanda Tanzania, South Sudan, Zambia and Uganda

Representatives from government food control agencies,

Representatives from the flour milling industry

Master and Ph.D students from schools of nutrition and food-technology

Invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you today to the Pearl of Africa and to the official opening of this landmark *'Regional Training Workshop on Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) for Flour Fortification.*

Thank you for choosing Uganda and the historical Makerere University as the workshop venue.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is committed to fighting malnutrition in all its forms as outlined in the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan. Food Fortification (wheat flour, maize flour, oil, salt) compliments other on-going nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive efforts such as Breast Feeding promotion; Nutrition Education/Social Behaviour Change, Communication supplementation (Vitamin A, Iron Folic Acid Supplementation, Micronutrient Powders, Therapeutic zinc supplementation as a part of diarrhea management, Deworming, Integrated management of acute malnutrition, environmental health and the Malaria control programs among others.

Food fortification is a multi-sectoral public private partnership that is well placed in the **Vision 2040** and the second **National Development Plan (NDPII)**, that call for a *paradigm shift from curative facility-based approaches to a preventive household based health delivery system.*

The multi-sectoral Food fortification program in Uganda is coordinated by the Nutrition Unit of the Ministry of Health, through the National Working Group on Food Fortification (NWGFF), under the leadership of the Director General Health Services. The program operates under four arms: Policy and coordination, production and marketing, quality control and quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research; and social marketing. A key component of **successful food fortification programmes** is the internal and external regulatory **monitoring** by which the private and public sectors collaborate to produce quality-fortified food.

Notable steady progress has been made since the introduction of salt iodisation in 1993, followed by the mandatory regulation for the fortification of: edible oil with vitamin A; and wheat and maize flours with vitamin A, Iron and Folic acid in 2013. The Universal Iodization Salt program has been able to ensure adequate recommended dietary intake (RDI) for the majority of women of reproductive age (15-49years), with almost all (99%) households consuming adequately fortified salt as reported by the FACT (Preliminary results) and (UDHS, 2012). The national coverage of fortifiable oil is also quite high and has a potential for making an important contributions to dietary intake of vitamin A.

We are however faced with a few bottlenecks in the area of quality control/ quality assurance and regulatory monitoring and the creation of demand for fortified products. There are notable gaps in laboratory testing of vitamins in (fortified) foodstuffs, premixes and food safety parameters such as mycotoxins and pesticides including environmental pollutants and residues of veterinary drugs.

We therefore welcome efforts aimed at improving the quality of our fortified foods across the whole food chain from ‘farm to folk’

This calls for a multifaceted approach including strengthening food safety and quality systems in both the public and private sector and trainings like this one. We are confident that this will enhance regional/local capacities to regularly monitor and test food products and thus lead to the provision of reliable and reasonable analytical results that are trusted and used by authorities, industry and other stake holders. The Ministry of Health in Uganda is committed to playing its part in spearheading the implementation of this multi-sectoral task as guided by the Food and Drugs Act and the Uganda Nutrition Plan (2011-2016).

I would like to once again thank the organisers of this training workshop namely Makerere University, Ghent University and the Smarter Futures Partnership (Food Fortification Initiative (FFI), The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF), Helen Keller International (HKI), AkzoNobel and the Dutch Government) and all other stakeholder for supporting this workshop and for their commitment to ending Hidden Hunger (Micronutrient Deficiencies) in the Region

I am delighted that one of the key outcomes of this meeting is a national report on the current status of flour fortification practices; strengths, weaknesses, challenges and future perspectives

I believe that this workshop will provide a significant contribution in the control of the nutritional quality and safety of all fortified foods in addition to flour, and thus foster good health and promote trade across the region.

I would like to declare this workshop open, and wish you successful deliberations.

For God and my Country