

Joint Statement by WHO and UNICEF Uganda Country Offices on the commemoration of World Breastfeeding Week

Kampala, 12th August 2025 – Every year the 1st week of August is designated as the World Breastfeeding Week and the Ministry of health, WHO, UNICEF, and partners in Uganda join the rest of the world in Commemorating the World Breastfeeding Week. This year's theme: *"Prioritize Breastfeeding: Create sustainable support systems"* provides us with the opportunity and platform to recognize and promote breastfeeding as a powerful foundation for lifelong health, development, and equity, and a critical investment in the future. This year's commemoration will especially help shine a particular spotlight on the support that women and babies need from the healthcare system through their breastfeeding journey.

Breastfeeding ensures that every child has the best possible start in life. It provides nutritional, mental, and emotional benefits to both infant and mother. Breastfeeding is also linked to economic growth due to its effect in cognitive development and thinking, which has an impact on education attainment, job engagement, and lifetime earnings.

The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2022 shows great strides registered in improving the breastfeeding rates in the country. The report indicates exclusive breastfeeding rates in child 0-6 months at 94%; while 96% of children were reported to having ever breastfed. In addition, 82% were reported to have been put on the breast within one hour of birth while 86% were put skin-to-skin to the mother within the first hour of birth to promote breast feeding. These statistics reflect the significant efforts undertaken by the government of the republic of Uganda to promote breastfeeding

Despite all the above achievements, a lot of additional work remains to be undertaken to sustain the gains made, with particular focus on the most vulnerable mothers and babies and those in most difficult of circumstances that impede successful breastfeeding. We need to continue promoting breastfeeding, supporting enforcement of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk

Substitutes, ensure women have access to breastfeeding counselling and support along with the information, advice, reassurance, and confidence they need to nourish their babies optimally. We need to focus support for breastfeeding premature babies through scaling up the set up of breast milk banks across the country.

WHO, UNICEF, and the Uganda Ministry of Health call on all partners including the private sector to join us and support breastfeeding as a lifesaving measure, through all available avenues including advocacy, capacity building, engagement with traditional, cultural and religious leaders, legislation, and community engagement/mobilization.

WHO and UNICEF reaffirm their strong commitment to continue working with and supporting the Ministry of Health to continue to strengthen the health system required to adequately support mothers to successfully breastfeed to sustain and further improve the current national breastfeeding rates.



Dr. Kasonde Mwinga
WHO Representative in Uganda



Dr. Robin Nandy
UNICEF Representative Uganda