Rwanda’s Chamber of Deputies has given the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion a year to correct widespread failures in national programs aimed at reducing child malnutrition and stunting.

The order came Thursday after lawmakers reviewed a report from the Committee on Social Affairs. The committee said progress has been made in recent years, but major gaps continue to place children at risk.

Committee Chairperson Veneranda Uwamaliya said members carried out field visits from May 5 to 12 in 12 districts across the provinces and three districts in the City of Kigali. The districts were chosen because they had either the highest or lowest stunting rates.

The lawmakers said the visits revealed serious problems in home-based Early Childhood Development centers. Some centers do not operate every day. Others fail to provide enough food, or provide meals that lack proper nutrients. Caregiver training is often inadequate, and sanitation standards fall below national requirements. Some centers also operate without proper authorization.



The committee noted that Parliament had previously ordered the ministry to resolve licensing and compliance problems within four months, but said the ministry failed to meet the deadline.

The report showed deeper systemic challenges as well. Many parents still lack awareness about proper nutrition and daily feeding practices. In some homes, poverty and limited knowledge mean children miss meals altogether. The committee found that several health centers lack dedicated nutrition staff, making it harder to monitor and support children at risk. Community health workers also lack reliable tools to measure children’s growth.

District spending on nutrition programs is another concern. Lawmakers said budgets often favor monitoring activities over actual implementation, limiting progress. They also cited delays in delivering nutritional supplements to families.

Lawmakers said weak coordination among government institutions continues to slow national efforts to reduce stunting, despite long-standing government commitments.

During Thursday’s session, MPs called on the ministry to improve food preparation and hygiene in community kitchens and encourage greater parental involvement in early childhood programs. They said early learning centers need more reliable training for caregivers and better teaching materials to help stimulate early brain development.

The Chamber of Deputies directed the ministry to fix all identified problems within 12 months. Lawmakers said they expect closer cooperation between the ministry and district authorities to ensure safer care, more nutritious meals and stronger early-learning support for children.

The committee said it will continue to monitor the ministry’s progress to ensure the reforms are completed on time.