



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO Rwanda Newsletter

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*Access to water
increases farm
productivity &
mitigates climate
change. FAO built
Water dams in
Rulindo District*



WELCOME



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Rwanda will be hosting the seventh session of the Governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) in Kigali, from 30 October to 03 November 2017.

This was confirmed and announced by the Rwandan Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources during the 40th Session of the FAO Conference in Rome in early July 2017. This is the first time a country in Sub-Saharan Africa will host a session of the Treaty's Governing Body.

Issues to be discussed would notably touch on the development of crops that can withstand effects of climate change and diseases in order to address rampant hunger and poverty facing the world, and Africa in particular. The entire FAO-Rwanda team is pleased and honoured to be associated with the organization of such a high level conference contributing towards the common goal of ending hunger.

In this edition of FAO-Rwanda newsletter, we also document some of our results areas over the last three months. Read about FAO's efforts in solving water scarcity in Rulindo district (Northern Province) and building the resilience of farmers against climate change contributing to the realization of the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) – "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". As Rwanda strives to restore the forest cover to 30 percent by 2020, read about FAO support to the government to establish a taskforce that is coordinating efforts of various institutions and stakeholders in natural resource management through the Agroforestry cross-sectoral taskforce.

FAO facilitated the visit of Ethiopian delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to Rwanda, to learn from the country's experience in customizing emerging priorities in the development process and in the implementation of the actual program. A good example of promoting South-South Cooperation.

As always, we remain fully committed to working towards a hunger free world.

Enjoy your reading!

Attaher Maiga

FAO Representative in Rwanda

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Rwanda's Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Geraldine Mukeshimana addressing participants at the 40th Session of the FAO Conference in Rome in July.

Rwanda is a Contracting Party to the Treaty since October 2010. The country established the National Genebank to conserve and promote the sustainable utilization of plant, forest, animal and beneficial microbial genetic resources.

About the International Plant Treaty (ITPGRFA):

- ◆ Was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the FAO on 3 November 2001 and it is in force since June 2004.
- ◆ The Treaty aims at:
 - recognizing the enormous contribution of farmers to the diversity of crops that feed the world;
 - establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials;
 - ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from the use of these genetic materials with the countries where they have been originated.

Facts and Figures:

- 1) The treaty has more than 190 delegations
 - Contracting Parties
 - Observers countries, CSOs and private sector Organizations
 - Other UN and International organizations
- 2) Has transferred over 4.2 million seed around the world
- 3) Funded more than 65 projects in 55 countries through the benefit-sharing Fund
- 4) Supported more than 1 million farmers on conservation and use of Traditional seeds

Rwanda to host the 7th session of the Governing Body of the International Plant Treaty

Rwanda confirmed its commitment to host the **Seventh Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)** in Kigali, that will take place from **30 October – 03 November 2017**.

At the 40th Session of the FAO Conference in Rome, Rwandan Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Geraldine Mukeshimana said:

“The FAO’s International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is particularly well-placed to help us all move towards fulfilling a number of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals – particularly targets 2.5 and 15.6 with regard to promoting sustainable agriculture and to conserving and using the world’s food crop biodiversity”.

The theme of the Seventh Session is ‘The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Role of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.’

Minister Mukeshimana reiterated Rwanda’s commitment to “working together towards the common goal of ending hunger,” citing the ongoing efforts to strengthen Rwanda’s fourth Strategic Plan for agriculture transformation (PSTA 4) to address issues of productivity, youth employment and climate change.

The Strategic Plan will guide the update of the agriculture sector investment plan needed to fast track the zero hunger goal in Rwanda.

The Seventh Session of the Governing Body in Kigali will be preceded by two days of regional and inter-regional consultations and other special events on 28 and 29 October 2017.

African nations adopt a common position on the International Plant Treaty

Delegates from the African Union Commission convened in Rwanda for a two-day Regional Workshop on the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

The Workshop provided African countries the opportunity to coordinate their position and strengthen their negotiating capacity in preparation for the Seventh Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty that will be held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 30 October to 3 November 2017.

The theme of the Seventh Session is 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Role of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.'

Addressing participants at the opening day of the Workshop, Assistant FAO Representative, Otto Vianney Muhinda spoke of the importance of a consolidated African position on issues of common interest and said that this would contribute to the overall success of the Governing Body session in Kigali. This will be the first time this global policy forum is being convened in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Seventh Session of the Governing Body will bring together representatives from 144 member countries of the International Treaty, in addition to NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, other International Organizations and observers, drawing more than 600 participants from around the world.

Seeking a collective voice

The acting Secretary of the ITPGRFA, Kent Nnadozie, said: "This Workshop provides a unique opportunity for African regional delegates to interact with one another and arrive at a common regional position on issues to be discussed during the Governing Body meeting in Kigali."

Participants comprised national policy-makers and experts in the field of crop conservation and plant breeding.

Discussions included the important role of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They shared views on resource mobilization to support farmers, who are the custodians of plant varieties, particularly in developing countries.

Among other issues of particular interest to the African region were more equitable and easier access to different varieties of seeds, and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of material in the International Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.

The African Union efforts thus far

The African Union (AU) has been active in biodiversity conservation and member countries have joined a number of global pacts in addition to the International Treaty, including the Multilateral Environmental Agreement and Nagoya protocol. Dr. Janet Edeme, Head, Rural Economy Division, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, said: "agriculture is one of the cornerstones for the livelihood and survival of the people of the continent."



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African delegates discussing the continent's position ahead of the 7th Session of the Governing Body of the International Plant Treaty in Kigali. How decisions made at the Seventh Governing Body would be translated into national policy.

Role of the Plant Treaty

The International Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing provides facilitated access to different types of varieties and plant genetic material for scientists and plant breeders to develop crop varieties better adapted to changing climate, pests and disease.

Addressing water scarcity to improve agriculture and livelihoods in Rulindo

Uwimana Annonciata wakes up every day at 3am to go irrigate her crops with water from Yanze River, if she doesn't get the water early she won't be allowed to use it.

She is also avoiding conflict with other farmers over water of the river. Annonciata's district, Rulindo, is upstream in the Yanze River that also supplies water to Kigali.

The Yanze watershed is the main source of the water supply for the Kigali providing up to 80 percent of the water requirements for the capital city (RNRA 2012). Like Uwimana, about 16,833 households in the District depend on Yanze watershed (Ministry of local government, 2010).

Due to the competition for water for agriculture and supply to Kigali, farmers are often denied the right to use the waters. Berumuhire Jean Bosco, a horticulture farmer in the Ngoma sector says they have been counting losses during short and long dry spells, despite the river passing through their farming areas.

"At times we spend two to three days without irrigating our crops and productivity would be affected," he says.

"Potato seedlings and cassava plants have been drying up for not getting water even when we apply fertilizer. Soils in this area are dry, if we don't irrigate during low rain seasons, the productivity reduces" says Annonciata.

In response to this reality, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) made an intervention in two cells in the sector of Ngoma, Rulindo district, through the project: *"Rational use of Yanze River water for local agriculture development in Rulindo District and for domestic use in Kigali City"*.

Small dams for storing water

Under the project, four dams were constructed targeting over 200 households. Each dam has a storage capacity of 400 cubic meters and is equipped with a treadle pump.

The inflow into the dams is either from the streams that flow into Yanze River or from rainwater. The dams provide water for supplemental irrigation for a total area of around 10 hectares, belonging mostly to members of the Yanze Horticulture Production Cooperative (YAHOPROC).

Ruhiza Jean Boroto, Senior Land and Water Officer, Land and Water Division at FAO while visiting the site emphasized that the project will reduce the vulnerability of the farmers to water scarcity and ensure effective use of Yanze river water for agriculture and for supply to Kigali City.

"In the prevailing context of higher climate variability with the rainy season being no longer predictable, supply of water is extremely important for the farmers. These small dams are a reliable source of water which will allow farmers to produce their vegetables for their own food security but also to generate income through the sale of the surplus produced; this income will in turn contribute to improving other components of their livelihoods," he said



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One of the dams constructed in Rulindo district through FAO's support to facilitate nearby households get water for Agriculture.

The future is bright

Nzariturande Ferdinand just like other farmers are convinced that there is going to be transformation in their livelihoods.

"The productivity of my farm will increase because I will be able to irrigate the crops and I will be growing crops all year round. Farming land will increase we will start cultivated even the idle land on the slope," says Ferdinand.

With incomes from selling the produce, farmers will improve their livelihoods as they will be capable of paying their children's school fees, make health insurance contribution among others. The project supports the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, SDG2 – "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture".

Ethiopian delegation visits Rwanda for an experience-sharing tour

As Ethiopia prepares the second phase of the 10 year Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) named as National Agricultural Investment Framework (NAIF), two areas of experience are found critical for the successful development of the NAIF as well as implementation success. The areas are experience of other countries in the *development* and *implementation* of agriculture strategies.

It is along this line that the team from two ministries; Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, in charge of updating and coordinating the framework visited Rwanda to get experience on how the country is customizing emerging priorities in the development process and experience in the implementation of the actual program including the coordination, harmonization and monitoring mechanisms.

The visit was facilitated by FAO through the Regional initiative “Africa’s Commitment to End Hunger by 2025”. Under this initiative, FAO supports and capacitates governments in focus countries to engage in multi-sectoral planning, coordinated implementation, monitoring and evaluation under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) initiative in the context of Malabo declaration.



Left: Some members of the Ethiopian team being shown parts of the privately owned Coffee Washing Station in Rulindo district.

Apart from getting money, the farmers receive training from the Coffee washing station on how to transform coffee husks into manure for their plantations.

The team toured Musanze seed Potato Centre where they witnessed the whole potato value chain from research on suitable seeds to distributing selected seeds to farmers and farmers supplying the potato produce back to the Centre for processing.

They visited a Coffee Washing Station in Rulindo where farmers are benefiting from the Value Chain.

Zena Habtewold Biru, Director, Planning and Programme Directorate, Ethiopia and CAADP focal Person, said: “Rwanda has obviously made progress in cascading CAADP in national programmes and developed the coordination and accountability framework for both the government and donors”.

“Lessons on the linkage between research and extension services were insightful, in our country we separate them, the system of performance contracts through which every stakeholder understands their part in the implementation of set targets will certainly be relevant to integrate in the framework. In Musanze, we saw how farmers are participating in the whole value chain up to processing,” he added.

While visiting the ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources, they were taken through how technical support is transferred to the grass root, integration of ICT in data collection and the collaboration between the ministry and other institutions—public and private. Another lesson for the Ethiopian delegation is how to increase coffee exports currently the country consumes 98% of the coffee produced while Rwanda exports 99% of the annual 22,000 MT production.

Cross-sectoral taskforce supporting forest restoration commitments

Rwanda has invested in a number of efforts that will drive it to meet the forest restoration target by 2020, some of which include institutional and stakeholder coordination in natural resources restoration.

In 2011, Rwanda committed to restore two million hectares of land cover by 2020, as part of the Bonn Challenge; a global aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded lands by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. Rwanda also envisions to increase forest cover to 30% by 2020.

It is in this regard that a Cross Sectoral Task Force under the leadership of the government and with the facilitation of FAO was established in 2015 to coordinate agriculture and natural resource restoration activities being done by local ministries, institutions and the partners.

In September, the Task Force met in a three day retreat in which key recommendations were adopted aimed to strengthen and inform the drafting of the next Agroforestry strategic plan. The plan will be aligned with other national plans such as the PSTA4 and National Agriculture policy.

Amini Mutaganda, Head of Forestry and Nature Conservation Department at the ministry of Lands & Forestry, emphasized that with the contribution of every Rwandan and institutions the commitment will be realized.

"Trees planted in homes, in towns, on mountain slopes will contribute to the attainment of the Bonn Challenge," he noted.

Preceding to the meeting, members of the Taskforce held a field visit to Muyanza integrated project (Land husbandry, Hillside irrigation, water harvesting, community organization and capacity building) in Rulindo district, Northern Province.

The Taskforce toured progressive and radical terraces constructed at the site to address severe soil erosion on hill side areas, and very low productivity of the lands, among others.

The Taskforce pledged to build strong collaboration across ministries all the way down to local cooperatives, and advocate for capacity building of key farmers and NGOs and increasing research in the forestry sector.



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A farmer tends to her Onion field in Nyagatare, Rwanda. Contract farming assures smallholder farmers market for their products.

Contracting farming: Linking farmers and agribusiness firms

FAO trained over 30 farmers, legal and policy makers as well as leaders in private agribusiness sector in contract farming. The training workshop focused on increasing linkages between farmers and agribusiness firms and to address enormous challenges including lack of access to farm inputs, modern technologies, finance and markets faced by smallholder farmers. In Rwanda, nearly 75% of the population is engaged in smallholder farming.

Chantal Mukeshimana of KOABIKI Potato Cooperative in Musanze took part in the training: "Initially, the contracts were signed without consulting with the farmers. But now that we know what the contracts are and my role in them, has empowered me to articulate my terms during the drafting," she says.

FAO Representative to Rwanda, Attaher Maiga cited the importance of Contract farming in improving efficiency and smallholder farm inclusiveness in food and agriculture systems.

"Through these contracting schemes, buyers of farm products can ensure that they will have a regular supply of produce that meet quality requirements and are timely delivered, while Farmers, on the other hand, can benefit from having a guaranteed market for their products and, in many cases, gain access to technology, inputs and financing," he noted.

In Rwanda, successful contract farming schemes have been implemented in coffee and grain.



© FAO/Placide Nshuti Kanyabujinja

Placide Nshuti Kanyabujinja is an Irrigation engineer at FAO office in Rwanda. He joined FAO mid last year managing a project on Small Scale Irrigation Technology (SSIT) aimed at improving the resilience of small farmers to alleviate climate change induced droughts.

What is your background been in?

I am a trained and professional Hydraulic – Irrigation engineer with close to 8 years work experience in many aspects of Water engineering. I have been involved in the design and implementation of water related projects mainly in Hyro-agricultural projects.

What words of wisdom would you pass on?

"Believing in yourself is an endless destination. Believing you have failed, is the end of your journey."

How has your past shaped you?

Growing up with both parents being teachers, they always reminded us to work hard. As I grew up I realized that indeed hard work pays-off.

The chicken or the egg, which came first?

Laughs... I think the chicken was created first along with other creatures and then the egg was formed in the Chicken.

Office Address:

FAO Representation in Rwanda
Umuganda Blvd, Glory House,
2nd Floor, Kacyiru, Kigali

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1502 Kigali, Rwanda
Email: FAO-RW@fao.org
Twitter: @FAORwanda
Website: www.fao.org/rwanda/en/



Upcoming Calendar of Events

- **October 24:** United Nations Day
- **October 26:** World Food Day in Rwanda
- **October 28– 03 November:** 7th Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Kigali
- **November 7—10:** Solar powered irrigation in Eastern Africa, from technology to up-scaling in Kigali.



Rolling Hills of Nyabihu, Rwanda