Creating employment opportunities for youth through projects in Agriculture, while ensuring the sector remains green & sustainable.
WELCOME

Attaher Maiga
FAO Representative in Rwanda

FAO has continued to support the Government of Rwanda through technical assistance and carrying out on-field activities contributing to ending hunger and improving the living conditions of Rwandans, in line with set national priorities.

At the beginning of this year, the Government rolled out consultations on the 4th Agriculture Transformation Strategic Plan (PSTA4). This culminated to the PSTA4 knowledge seminar at the beginning of June in which Government stakeholders led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, FAO experts across the Organization, and others from other parts of the world as well as agriculture stakeholders, including Farmers Organizations, CSOs, NGOs, Private sector actors, convened in Kigali, to share their experiences and expertise on how the new Strategic plan would encourage innovations to make the agriculture sector more productive, resilient and profitable. The valuable and practical ideas shared and discussed will shape the new strategic plan (PSTA4) which is being drafted with technical support from FAO, in the framework of an EU-funded project.

In this edition of the newsletter, we also share with you our initiatives in promoting youth interest and involvement in the agriculture sector as a business, with a value chain and market-oriented perspectives. Other stories include FAO’s support on agriculture-social protection linkages aimed at upscaling and accelerating beneficiaries' graduation out of poverty, farmers’ capacity development and equipment in small scale irrigation technologies as a response to climate change, etc.

Through the dedicated teams at Rwanda office and other colleagues at FAO, the Organization is committed to support the Government of Rwanda in its efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals particularly SDG 2 to end hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture.

Nice reading!

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Upcoming events

FAO Rwanda Newsletter 2017
Innovating for productive, green and market-led agricultural sector will be emphasized in the new Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA4) for the government of Rwanda under formulation by FAO in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and animal resources (MINAGRI) with the financial support from European Union and other partners.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Rwanda’s economy, contributing approximately 33% to Rwanda’s GDP (NISR/GDP-Second Quarter 2016) and employing 72% of the labour force. PSTA4 will come on the heels of the PSTA-III whose period ends in 2017/18 financial year.

Some experts at the knowledge seminar organized by FAO and MINAGRI observed that the fact that Rwanda has a very young labour force, agricultural diversity will be crucial to create non-farm jobs.

The minister of agriculture and animal resources, Geraldine Mukeshimana stressed that PSTA4 should open doors for more job opportunities in the sector.

“The agriculture transformation must be seen in the context of rural transformation by unlocking the potential of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), through job creation.

The challenge for PSTA 4 is to put the right package together for citizens to choose the right path for them, whether Agricultural or non-Agricultural”, Minister Mukeshimana noted.

Johan Cauwenbergh, Head of Cooperation at EU said it was crucial that Agriculture positions itself correctly in the context of government’s over-arching goals – EDPRS III and SDGs.

“The development of vibrant agro-dealer networks was the first necessary step. It was clear that the government cannot remain an implementer as it is today, but must become an enabler”, he noted.

PSTA4 will cover the period from 2018-2023 and will look to boost the sector’s performance. The new agricultural strategy being designed with the technical support from FAO will be structured around four core pillars: ‘Productivity, commercialization, nutrition and food security’, ‘Resilience & sustainability’, ‘Inclusive employment & farmers’ skills’ and ‘Effective enabling environment & responsive institutions’.
**Linking social protection and agriculture to end extreme poverty and boost nutrition.**

The current 16.3% rate of extreme poverty in Rwanda (EICV4 2013/2014) required integrated efforts to be reduced to zero by year 2020 as targeted in EDPRS II for 2013-2018.

FAO in April launched the Technical Cooperation Programme project titled “Strengthening the impact of Rwanda's VUP-Public Works and beneficiaries' graduation out of poverty”.

The project is aimed to promote the coherence between Social Protection and Agriculture to accelerate the graduation from poverty in Rwanda through the government's new anti-poverty strategy “Minimum Package for graduation”.

The permanent secretary in the Ministry of Local Government, Odette Uwamariya said: “FAO’s support will give vulnerable people the extra push that is needed to break out of the cycle of poverty in a sustainable way”.

The project is benefiting communities in four selected sectors in the districts of Nyabihu, Gakenke, Rubavu and Rulindo.

**In May this year, Forest & Landscape Investment Forum (FLIF) took place in Kigali, to support the efforts of African countries to achieve forest & landscape restoration targets, specifically SDG 15, the Bonn Challenge, and African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).**

The conference was attended by project developers and business champions from ten countries and investors from all over the world in a marketplace for effective forest and landscape investment opportunities. The countries are; Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Zambia, and Rwanda.

Rwanda has been at the forefront of Forest & Landscape Restoration (FLR) since years, pledging to restore 2 million hectares to the Bonn challenge.

Rwanda’s Minister for Natural Resources, Dr Vincent Biruta, observed that: “The main barrier to tackling these amounts is not the lack of investors willing to engage but rather the lack of knowledge of stakeholders on the variety of financing opportunities and on how to get ready to access them”.

FLR is one of the key approaches for reversing the destructive cycle of land degradation & ensuring sustainable land management. The recent analysis by FAO and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, shows that between USD 36-49 billion of investments are needed every year to achieve these goals. But investments in FLR are unevenly distributed worldwide. While most are made in Latin America, only one percent are in Africa.
Empowering youth in Agriculture

FAO has supported governments to strengthen young people’s skills to be able to seize current and future decent rural employment opportunities. In Rwanda, FAO through a TCP facility has supported the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) that has been running from August 2016 to July 2017.

The members of the forum have benefitted from several trainings and activities. Amongst those were trainings on use of ICT to improve agribusinesses and link with possible investors, and how to link products to consumers; Study Tours to other successful youth agripreneurs; and creating connections between RYAF and the financial sector and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

One beneficiary is Alexandre Nshimiyimana who produces Beauty Products from Avocados. The 26 year old had no business background when he first engaged in soap processing with ingredients including palm oil.

"Becoming an entrepreneur was my dream. I thought to myself, all people use soap to bath, why can’t manufacture soap!,” Alexandre challenged himself.

"I looked at the avocado trees that have been in our compound and I remembered that they do have oil. I started producing mixing right quantities of organic ingredients to make soap from avocados. The first batch was liked on the market” Alexandre speaks with a grin.

The trainings from FAO have had positive impacts on the way Alexandre is developing and growing his business. He exploits ICT to reach a bigger clientele base. His company SANIT WING has expanded to produce also Vaseline and Hair oil. All the three products use organic ingredients and exfoliators.

“My business has expanded largely due to increased use of social media platforms for marketing and consequently getting on board new clients. FAO has given me and other agripreneurs exposure; we get to interact and exchange ideas with business people who are ahead of us”, he affirms.

His business now has 8 permanent employees all young people involved in the manufacturing of the products.

In order to meet the ever growing demand for his products, Alexandre has started contracting farmers to grow the avocados and other plants whose oil is used in the production of the products.

He believes agriculture has potential to provide numerous job opportunities to many young people when appropriate technologies are applied. End
Formalizing informal Trade for poverty reduction

FAO in collaboration with Consumer Unity &Trust Society (CUTS) launched a two-day regional workshop in Rwanda on the formalization of informal trade, to review best practices and lessons learned from interventions to formalize informal markets.

About 35 representatives from international development partners, trade NGOs, women’s associations, research institutions and the private sector from Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Zambia, India, Germany and Italy attended the workshop, which developed a set of policy recommendations on trade formalization targeting Regional Economic Communities and scaling up support to women’s trade associations and cooperatives.

FAO country representative to Rwanda, Attaher Maiga, stressed the need to have data in place on women’s contribution to informal trade.

"Addressing the specific needs of women traders is hampered by the limited availability of data able to demonstrate the scale of the informal market and women's contribution to informal trade. Making informed decisions about the required support for women engaged in informal trade will depend on improving the generation of sex-disaggregated data within agricultural trade surveys necessary to develop tailored programme responses", he noted.

During the event, FAO commissioned study ‘Formalization of informal trade in Africa: Trends, experiences and socio-economic impacts’ published earlier this year in partnership with CUTS.

The publication explores the issue of trade formalization and the potential benefits to women traders who often dominate informal trade markets in the Africa region.

The Publication: ICBT accounts for an estimated 70% of employment in sub-Saharan Africa, and further constitutes the majority of informal activity in most African countries. Research shows that on average size of the informal economy in Africa amongst the largest in world accounting for 42% of GDP.

Some of the meeting recommendations include; Strengthening of ICBT data collection at the border posts; Mainstreaming ICBT in national regional economic policy dialogues; Streamlining procedures for trade formalization and reduce bureaucracy incentives., among others. End
**In support of Rwanda’s Small Scale Irrigation Plan**

FAO trained about 35 District agronomist, Irrigation Officers as well as service providers in Small Scale Irrigation technologies (SSIT) to support the country’s Irrigation vision. Rwanda envisages to have at least 100,000ha of land irrigated by 2020. Currently 45,000ha are under Irrigation.

The training was conducted in the framework of implementing an FAO’s Technical Cooperation Project, “Support for Enhancing Small Scale Irrigation Technologies in Rwanda”.

“The training has strengthened my irrigation technical capacity. It has also introduced me to better usage of the budget for irrigation technologies. In Kirehe district we won’t lack food because many farmers will be irrigating their crops”, says Monique, a district irrigation officer in Kirehe.

The 2010 Irrigation Master Plan indicates that Rwanda has the potential irrigable area of 589,711ha. 

**Rusizi Cooperatives receive storage & Transportation equipment**

FAO handed over a set of equipment to four Cooperatives (Dukomezumurimo, CODEPEC, KOABATOM and Dushakumurimo) operating in Rusizi district. The equipment include, fridges, plastic boxes, cargo motorcycles, outboard motors, pirogue boats, isothermal boxes and lifejackets. The cooperatives deal with fish and tomato, selling their products in Rusizi and across the border in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

The incorporation of equipment within the cooperatives is expected to contribute to making agri-food systems more inclusive, efficient and address gender inequalities. The insulated boxes and the fridges will help cooperatives to better preserve food during collection, storage and transportation, while motorized boat and the cargo motorcycles will facilitate transportation for poor traders. The plastic boxes will be used for more efficient and hygienic bulking and transportation of tomato. The benefiting cooperative members will be given training on how to use the equipment and their maintenance.

**Up-bottom: FAO Consultant (in black coat) hands over the equipment to Chairperson of one of the benefiting Cooperatives as Rusizi district local officials witness the event; Some of the fridge and isothermal boxes given to the Cooperatives.**

**Left: The vehicle carrying the equipment to be distributed to the Cooperatives.**
Jean Claude Rwaburindi is an Agricultural Value Chain expert at FAO Rwanda. He supports in development of sustainable food value chain. He also contributes to implementation of a project in Rulindo district to make agriculture more productive, sustainable, market oriented and improve the livelihood and nutrition conditions of local populations.

Where did you go to school?
“I did my undergraduate at Higher Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in Rwanda, in Agricultural science; and my masters at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, in Agriculture and Applied economics.”

When growing up you had a dream, have you achieved that dream?
“My lifelong dreams not only involved raising a happy, healthy family, but also include growing with a company that promotes employees’ talents and skills to success. I’m excited to take on additional responsibilities to continue to grow and develop in this career field.”

How did you choose your career?
“I knew well in advance that the growing Production for agricultural products thanks to science and technology, would impact on the demand for people with training and expertise to come with innovations to feed people around the world”

What is your greatest fear?
“To be honest, there is nothing specific that I fear. If I had to choose a fear, I would mention something bad happening to a family member. I feel as though this is a common fear “.

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Upcoming Calendar of Events

- **October 28– 03 November**: 7th Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Kigali