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Sustainability is the cornerstone of FAO-Rwanda's work, from building the resilience of Rwandan families to supporting the domestication of the Sustainable Development Goals. Explore these initiatives and more in this quarter's newsletter.

WELCOME



In September, FAO-Rwanda had the pleasure of hosting the Regional workshop “Towards productive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Nine focus countries of the FAO Regional Initiative on Sustainable intensification of production and value chain development in Africa (RI2) participated. The event was a joint effort of FAO Strategic

Programmes (SP2, SP3, and SP4) with a contribution from Nutrition to support countries in understanding their role in implementing the 2030 Agenda through sustainable food and agriculture.

I was pleased that during this workshop each country developed a draft action plan for achieving the SDGs. We were all reminded that food and agriculture lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and that implementing sustainable agriculture is key to the achievement of the SDGs. The discussions highlighted that sustainability should not only be looked at from an environmental perspective, but also through economic and social lenses, leaving no one behind in protecting our planet for future generations. As Rwanda has already embarked in domesticating the SDGs, FAO-Rwanda remains committed to supporting Government, CSOs, and private sector actors in this endeavor.

As we share stories on our Sustainable Food and Agriculture approach and Landscape Restoration projects in Rulindo district, let me reiterate that collaboration, coordination, and partnership remain critical ingredients for impactful results. My great thanks to all FAO colleagues across the Organization for their tireless, appreciative, and multi-faceted support. Together, we can go far! Pleasant reading.

Attaher Maiga

FAO Representative in Rwanda

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Toward Agenda 2030:

Sustainable Agriculture Development in Africa

From September 19th to 21st, representatives from nine African countries converged in Kigali for the Regional workshop for Africa “Towards productive, sustainable and inclusive agriculture, forestry and fisheries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa”. The workshop examined how prioritizing sustainable agriculture can help achieve many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from ending poverty (Goal 1) to ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 13). Participants also examined how they can domesticate the goals in their countries’ policies, strategies, and programs.

Rwanda Minister of Agriculture Geraldine Mukeshimana opened the workshop by emphasizing the important role of the SDGs. “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to which all our countries have committed has the potential to transform our world, and our lives. By focusing on people, on our planet, on prosperity, on peace, and on partnership.”

Sustainable agriculture encompasses sustainable intensification, value chain development, poverty reduction, and nutrition sensitive agriculture. Speaking to the importance of protecting natural resources as well as countries’ citizens when developing, FAO Representative to Rwanda Attaher Maiga said, “Sustainability of food and agriculture is about using what we need to live now, without

The SDGs build upon the momentum of the Millennium Development Goals which expired in 2015. The SDGs are universal and were developed in an inclusive, participatory process. Their take-away message? “Leave no one behind”.

jeopardizing the potential for people to meet their needs in the future.”

Participants saw sustainable agriculture in action during a field visit to Yanze Marshland in Rulindo district, Northern Rwanda where they learned how farmers maximize small pieces of land for agricultural activities while protecting the environment.

“I saw how the farmers increased mushroom production and banana production and improved their livelihoods. I take those lessons and best practices back to my country to enable us to enhance agricultural productivity sustainably,” noted Deputy from Mozambique Cels lopes following the field tour.

Mr. lopes’s plan to bring what he learned in Rwanda back to his country was echoed by many participants. This kind of knowledge sharing was at the heart of the workshop and, most importantly, at the heart of the SDGs. With more than 150 world leader signatories there is infinite potential for sustainable and transformative global development, and FAO is excited to play an important role.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**



Ending Malnutrition Across Rwanda



Nkamiy'abanzi Théoneste showcases one of the offspring from his FAO provided pig.

One year ago, Nkamiy'abanzi Théoneste was struggling. Living in rural Rwanda with no education or farming land, it was difficult for him to find work, support his children's education, and pay for his family's health insurance. His children were malnourished and food insecurity was a daily anxiety.

In 2015, FAO-Rwanda implemented a joint One UN nutrition project "Accelerating stunting reduction among under-two children in Rwanda" in Nyamagabe district, as well as Rutsiro district where Théoneste lives. His family was selected as a beneficiary household and began to receive FAO support in small livestock rearing, kitchen garden production, nutrition education, and financial training. These activities increase household consumption of nutritious foods like milk, fortified beans, and vitamin-rich vegetables. They also provide income generating opportunities and improved financial management to beneficiaries.

In mid-2015, Théoneste received a pig and a goat along with veterinary drugs, educational support, and the expertise of a veterinary extension worker. He was

excited when eight months later his pig gave birth to ten piglets. He sold four and used the income from the sale plus additional savings to buy a cow whose milk enhances the diet of his family. He applies the manure from his animals to his vegetable garden and his children now have a nutritious diet.

"FAO improved my hope for life. The project gave me a jumpstart to prosperity and improved my household's welfare. My children don't fall sick often like before because they eat a balanced diet," he said.

As for the sustainability of these successes, FAO's Farmer Field and Life School trainings empower beneficiaries to build upon the project's support. As Théoneste proudly says, "Wealth is in my home. I feel like a responsible man in my house. I plan to get into piggery because I have realized it is a profitable business."

The journey of Théoneste and his family shows that with meaningful support, people throughout Nyamagabe, Rutsiro, and the rest of Rwanda can achieve more productive, fulfilling, and resilient lives.



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(Left) A member of the Assopthe Tea Cooperative preps nursery bags to be seeded with agroforestry species; (Center) Participants at the International Knowledge Sharing Workshop; (Right) Tea processing at Sorwathe Factory.

Improving Landscapes, Improving Lives

August was a busy time for FAO and its partner, the **International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)**. On August 26th through 28th the organizations hosted the Africa High Level Bonn Challenge Roundtable and the International Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in Kigali.

Policy makers discussed their countries' contributions to the Bonn Challenge to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020, while the bright minds and leaders of forest management and conservation shared programmatic insights, technical knowledge, and strategies to help achieve this ambitious goal.

Forest and Landscape Restoration focuses on the long-term restoration of functionality to complex environmental systems. While forest, watershed, and overall environmental health are crucial, FLR also includes improving the well-being of the landscapes' communities. A holistic vision like this can have deep, sustainable outcomes but also requires coordination. Ms Faustine Zoveda, FAO FLR Mechanism team focal

point, noted that restoration can be achieved through collaboration and supporting multi-stakeholder platforms for cross-sectoral dialogue.

"Improving coordination across stakeholders is key to achieve FLR. Also improving land use planning by mainstreaming landscape approaches and participation and adapting the enabling environment for improved coordination of large-scale FLR initiatives; and building capacities of national stakeholders to foster collaboration and integration."

FAO has built great successes in FLR in Rulindo district and participants had an opportunity to examine how multiple stakeholders work together; they explored the intersection of private sector investment, sustainable land management, and community development through visits to Assopthe Tea Cooperative tree nursery and the SORWATHE tea factory.

Seeing these positive partnerships was one of the most inspirational portions of the conference. And as evinced in Rulindo and across the Bonn Challenge countries, restoring the world's forests is the responsibility of everyone.

Vegetables Galore!

It was a dream come true for farmers in Rulindo district when the first vegetable collection unit in the area opened on September 20th. The new building was supported by FAO-Rwanda, Rulindo district, and Vi Agroforestry. Improved market access facilitation and value chain development are two of several FAO initiatives in Rulindo under its Sustainable Food and Agriculture and Forest and Landscape Restoration projects. The unit can accommodate 36 farmers and impressive amounts of vegetables, as well as the growing number of wholesale buyers and local customers.

Prior to the unit's construction, farmers used bicycles to ferry their produce to scattered clients. Between the loss of produce from spoiling during transport and the high fares charged to those who hired a truck, agricultural workers struggled to make a livable income. Now the farmers can collect their produce in a common location.

Bajyanama Alphonse, a horticulturist, welcomed the new collection unit saying, "Clients for our produce will increase and we will earn more money than before and this will improve the welfare of our families." With a grin, he added, "No farmer will be poor in this area."



The Vice Mayor of Economic Development of Rulindo addresses FAO officials and Yanze vegetable growers at the opening of the Yanze vegetable collection unit.



CDAIS facilitators create a needs assessment action plan.

Capacity Building for Innovation Systems

Change is rarely easy, but through Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) it just became easier. CDAIS is implemented by FAO-Rwanda and its partner Agrinatura to facilitate agricultural innovations.

On September 19th, FAO and Agrinatura began a week-long workshop for Rwanda facilitators who will conduct capacity needs assessment on five agricultural innovation niches. They include a dairy community processing centre, mainstreaming nutrition in an Agri extension model, catchments, horticulture/fruit tree production, and the cassava value chain. Facilitators will identify strengths and gaps in capacities/policies and assess partnerships.

CDAIS facilitators have a variety of technical backgrounds so during the workshop they developed a common understanding of assessment tools and learned how to work with stakeholders from different disciplines. "Working on different value chains we have diverse stakeholders such as farmers, policy makers etc. We have to learn how to approach each other to get accurate information" said Leon Niyibizi from University of Rwanda.

These assessments will inform innovations to address niche gaps; they are the first step to improve partnerships and productivity in Rwanda's agriculture sector.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

Kayitare Gilbert joined FAO Rwanda in 2015 as a Programme Manager for the Capacity Development for Agriculture Innovation Systems (CDAIS). While he grew up dreaming of becoming a surgeon, Gilbert found his calling in the Agriculture sector. Prior to the FAO he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. As he says, "My life is full of positive surprises."



Tell us about your role as the manager of CDAIS.

I manage the daily life of CDAIS which emphasizes strengthening the systems of innovation in the agriculture sector. I oversee all the processes and procedures and strive to build a conducive working environment with the diverse partner institutions.

What has been your experience working at FAO Rwanda?

What an amazing organization! I work with a professional and supportive team and am involved in decisions that support the organization. I am exposed to international experts and researchers and I am actively contributing to poverty reduction and fighting malnutrition amongst fellow Rwandans.

Do you have a guiding work principle?

"Finish what you start". I do my best to perfectly accomplish what I get involved in, and to enjoy it to the maximum.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I support charity programmes, relax with my friends, and enjoy Sunday church activities.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

- October 20th: World Food Day in Rwanda
- October 24th: United Nations Day
- December 5th: World Soil Day
- December 10th: Human Rights Day

