

50,000 Trees planted as Rwanda launches Forests Planting Season in Green Gicumbi Project designated area



Trees were planted in the designated area of the Green Gicumbi project which is being implemented by Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) to protect the environment, conserve the Muvumba catchment and improve the wellbeing of citizens as well as to contribute to the sustainable development without environmental degradation.



Development partners proud to be part of Rwanda's Green initiatives

While Rwandan President Paul Kagame and other World leaders have emphasised that the only sustainable way to go in the post pandemic will be the mutual interaction with nature, representatives from various development organisations in Rwanda have emphasised that cooperating with Rwanda in the field of environmental protection is a pride since environmental protection will have great positive impacts on the post COVID 19 world and future generations.

They expressed their satisfaction during separate interviews with TOP AFRICA NEWS at the side-line of the launch of Mayaga Landscape Restoration Project on October 23, 2020.

The same day of the project launch which took place in Nyanza District in the Southern Province of Rwanda

also marks the celebration of the 45th Anniversary of Rwanda's homegrown Tree Planting Day as well as the launching of the 2020-2021 Forests Planting Season.

As they joined the Minister of the Environment Dr. Mujawamariya Jeanne d'Arc in launching the multi-billion Rwanda Francs project to meet solutions to the Mayaga degraded region which has been aggravated by deforestation, the new UNDP country representative, Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Germany as well as the Belgium development partners undoubtedly emphasised that cooperating with Rwanda in making the world green is as much as protecting the lives of humanity and saving the world we live in.



Maxwell Gomera, the new UNDP Country Representative whose experience is mostly in environment and nature conservation says that “I knew that Rwanda was very successful African story, now it is great to see success in action and what we are doing today is very important especially in these extra-ordinary time when environment, healthcare, economy, political discussions around the world affirm that environment is the only hope that we have to manage and get rid of diseases that are transmitted from wildlife to human beings.”

Mr. Gomera who lauded the Government of Rwanda development initiatives, during the tree planting in the local community in Muyira sector of Nyanza district noted that “What we are doing with planting trees today, is part of helping environment to regenerate and prevent crisis from happening. But it is not just managing the health aspects of it. Environment is actually good economics.”

He explains that “By planting trees today is ensuring that the soils around here have got capacity to be

able to support agriculture, to support water retention, but also to enable community around here, to participate in what I call carbon market.

The Mayaga region in Rwanda is one of the most vulnerable parts of the country due to deforestation, which has caused the area to lose its fertile land while it was a food basket for Rwanda.

For this reason, in addition to other parts of Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with UNDP and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the Rwanda Environment Management Authority has launched a project of over Rwf 30 billion to rehabilitate the area and promote the development of afforestation and helping the local community in their Development.

Mr. Gomera highlights that “these trees are going to be capturing carbon from atmosphere. The tree planting project is extra-ordinary and what

we have done today, in this area alone (Nyanza-Muyira), we have been able to plant 150 hectares, the ambitions is to plant thousands of hectares and to be able to plant 8 million trees throughout the project”



“My mission right now is to ensure that new generations, that are growing up enjoy the same benefits that we enjoyed during our time in the same climate and environment that many others enjoyed in their youth.” Mr. Gomera added.

On the other hand, environmental experts and forest conservationists believe that there are good forestry projects that have been successful such as the Belgian-Netherland Governments-funded Project PAREF which can be learned from so that other projects are as successful as they were.

From the last 10 years since 2008, the Kingdom of Belgium and the Kingdom of Netherlands had been key players in forestry sector in Rwanda with 2 sister projects (PAREF Be 1&2, with 9 million Euros and PAREF NL 1&2 with 16 million Euros).

The two sister projects had similar objectives of increasing the Forestry resources and management through intensive afforestation on public areas and in terms of geographical coverage 15 out of 30 districts were covered (6 districts PAREF Be in East and North and 9 districts for PAREF-NL in North and West of Rwanda.)

According to the Enabel 2018 report, this joint Belgium-Netherlands project had attracted other donors in order to cover the rest of the districts, namely

the PGREF intervention of 4.5 million Euros financed by African Development Bank which covered other 8 districts in Southern Province of Rwanda.

According to Mr. Jean Michel Suarez, in charge of Cooperation in the Embassy of Belgium in Rwanda, there lessons that can be learnt from achievements made through the above-mentioned projects and can be used in current situation when the country’s move stays the same to increase the national green space.



Mr. Jean Michel Suarez, in charge of Cooperation in the Embassy of Belgium in Rwanda,

“I think that it allowed to develop the model which is very useful because it is also a model which associates the private sector. And so, I believe that this model, it is a model which is effective, which is even in my opinion will be used more and more in other countries outside the border of Rwanda, and I believe that this project also obviously all the surface that can be planted has also allowed the development of working model methods which are effective and which is also appreciated and which will be used in my opinion in other countries of the region” Mr. Jean Michel Suarez commented during an Interview with TOPAFRICANEWS.

The Ministry of Environment also acknowledges the role of the private sector in achieving Rwanda’s vision of afforestation and environmental protection.

Addressing the Mayaga community after the launch of the afforestation campaign for the year 2020-2021, the Minister of Environment Dr. Mujawamariya told the public that Rwanda is committed to contributing solutions to the impact of climate change through a variety of programs including afforestation, agricultural improvement and to addressing other human-activities that harm the environment.

“Forests are the source of Social well-being and Sustainable Development. We urge Rwandans to step up their efforts to plant and protect forests.” Minister Mujawamariya said.

She said Rwanda had promised that by 2020, it would have 30% of the country’s forested area.

“So far, we have surpassed that target. We are now at 30.4%. The goal is to continue President Kagame has sent me to tell you that living with forests is not bad. Forests are Health, we use forests to build the schools. So, let’s all work together to plant more forests and maintain them effectively.” She said.

She encourages private forests owners to form cooperatives so that they can be helped to manage them well and benefit from them.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)

Rwanda has now begun to look into how to implement one of the world’s effective programs on working with forest owners through Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), where the owner of an environmental protection service is paid or reimbursed to keep it safe.



Dr. Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya, Rwanda’s Minister of Environment

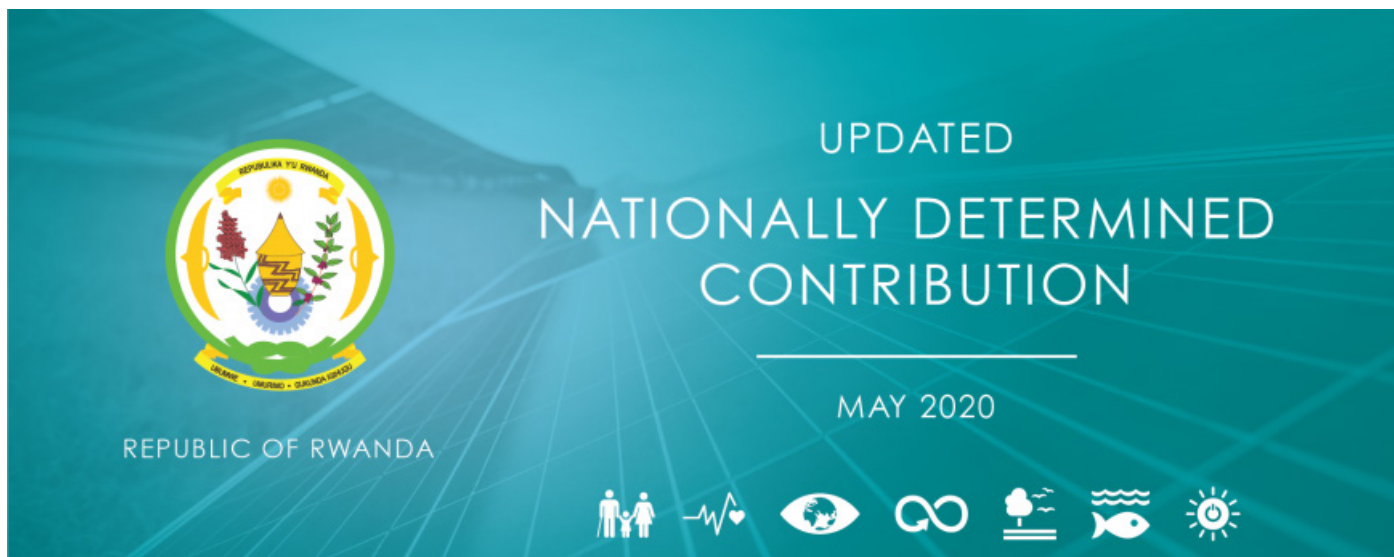
In this way, for example, it would be possible to provide livestock to the community, to help them find other forms of cooking energy to avoid cutting trees for firewood, to help them improve agriculture and housing so that they too could play a role in protecting the environment.

This well-known method in Costa Rica has been very helpful and it is later revealed that in Rwanda it has also been found useful and even the Mayaga Landscape Restoration project includes components such as the ones that look similar to the PES.

Rwanda, the first country in Africa to submit its updated NDC

In May, 2020, Rwanda has announced an ambitious climate action agenda that features a 38% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to business as usual by 2030, equivalent to an estimated mitigation of up to 4.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

The climate action plan, known officially as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), has been submitted to the United Nations Framework



Convention on Climate Change and forms part of Rwanda's obligations under the Paris Agreement.

All countries are required to submit an updated plan every five years, each with a greater level of ambition and Rwanda is the first country in Africa to submit its updated NDC, and the ninth country globally.

The updated NDC climate action plan has been informed by in-depth analysis, improved information and data, increased ambition, and an extensive stakeholder driven consultation process. It will see Rwanda invest billions of dollars in the transition to an inclusive, sustainable economy driven forward by green growth and green job creation.

Rwanda's total emissions are currently forecast to more than double over the 2015-2030 period. Reducing these emissions by 38% will come through improvements in energy production and use, industrial processes and product use, waste management, transport, and agriculture as well as new nature-based conservation initiatives.

To support the country to be more resilient to climate extremes, adaptation initiatives will focus on water, agriculture, land and forestry, human settlement, health, transport and mining.

Taken together, the country's efforts to limit its contribution to climate change and adapt to the consequences over the next decade will require approximately US \$11 billion, made up of 5.7 billion dollars for mitigation and 5.3 billion dollars for adaptation. It is expected that this funding will come from both domestic and external sources.

"Right now, is better than tomorrow!

In addition to the fact that the funding will come from outside and inside the country, there will also be other partnerships in various projects that support all programs in the NDC.

In an interview with Dorothea Groth, Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy in Kigali, she talked about the Germany's role in partnering with Rwanda in achieving its goals of tackling climate change impacts.

Mrs. Dorothea who was also representing the Government of Germany at the launch of Forests Planting event in Southern Province of Rwanda says that: "Partnering with Rwanda is very important. For Germans, trees are very important. Forests are important. Right now, we do have dying of forests in Germany because of Climate Change."

"So, we know what it means to rehabilitate and to plant trees and I want it to be here and articulate done. Planting trees to preserve the environment, to preserve the soil, and to have something for the future."

"Right now, is better than tomorrow! Right now, is better than next year" Mrs. Dorothea said.

Reported by: ANGE DE LA VICTOIRE Dusabemungu



50,000 Trees planted as Rwanda launches Forests Planting Season in Green Gicumbi Project designated area

About 50,000 trees of various species were planted on 20 hectares in Byumba sector in Gicumbi District on Saturday, November 7, 2020 as part of the launching of Forests Planting season for the year 2020/2021. Trees were planted in the designated area of the Green Gicumbi project which is being implemented by Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) to protect the environment, conserve the Muvumba catchment and improve the wellbeing of citizens as well as to contribute to the sustainable development without environmental degradation.

The launch of the Green Gicumbi Forest Planting Season was attended by various officials including the Minister of Environment, the Governor of the Northern Province, the UN Resident Coordinator, the Swedish Ambassador to Rwanda and other officials from Public institutions and private sector as well as the residents of Byumba sector in Gicumbi District, part of the Northern Province of Rwanda.

In his welcome address, Northern Province Governor Jean Marie Vianney Gatabazi assured the present officials, donors, the private sector and the general public that the Northern Province will do its utmost to ensure the success of the Green Gicumbi project and the protection of planted forests as well as various other activities to take place throughout the implementation.

However, Governor Gatabazi called on the implementers of the project to clearly state all the planned activities so that the people and the administration know about them and they too can plan in accordance with the Green Gicumbi project guidelines.





He explained that the project was launched last year and there was citizens' resistance but now the people are becoming more aware of it and it is clear that they are willing to play their role towards the success of this six-year project.

Governor Gatabazi requested the role of the people in rainwater harvesting as once not collected, it would damage the various infrastructure including the road provided by the President of the Republic linking Gicumbi District with other districts of the Northern

Province. On the issue of rainwater harvesting, the Minister of Environment Dr. Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya also expressed concern that there are six dangerous gullies in Gicumbi district alone adding that apart from causing landslides and environmental damage, that can also claim lives of people. "The issue of these gullies needs to be addressed. It is important to plant trees and grasses that hold the soil." She noted

Minister Mujawamariya, on the other hand, commended everyone for their contribution to the



restoration of forests coverage and the conservation of the already planted forests, noting that Rwanda had set a target of having 30% of the country's surface covered by forests in 2020, however, she added "We have now exceeded that target by 30.4%."

"Although we have achieved this goal, we should not ignore the fact that some old forests need to be harvested and others need to be planted," she added.

"It is also important to note that some have been cut down and no others have been planted, thus reducing the area

under forest cover." Minister Mujawamariya explains.

She said that among those forests cut down without reforestation, 67% belongs to the citizens.

"That is why through this Green Gicumbi project will help the people in reforestation through land consolidation so that they can be managed together," she revealed.

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In Rwanda, the afforestation culture is not new because Rwandans usually use a tree for a variety of purposes including firewood, building trees, appetizing fruit trees and more.



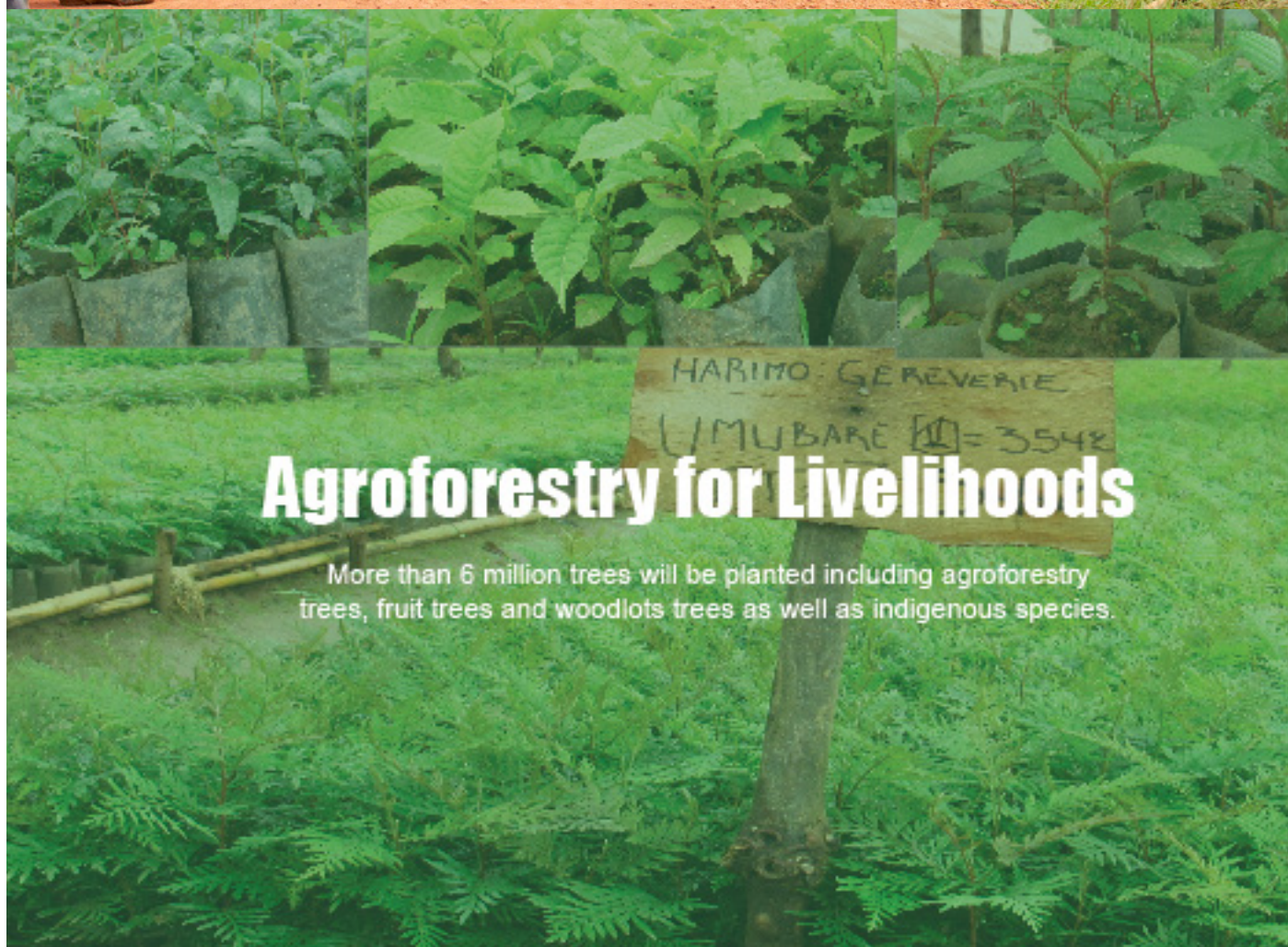
FONERWA Chief Executive Officer Teddy Mugabo Mpinganzima said that in Green Gicumbi, afforestation will play a role in protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development.

Mpinganzima said: “As FONERWA, we are pleased that the Green Gicumbi Project is progressing towards its goals. This is one of the most important for the country in terms of achieving an environmentally friendly economy.”

Rwanda continues to increase the forests coverage also to mitigate the impact of climate change and to contribute to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mpinganzima added that FONERWA is proud to work with partners and stakeholders to ensure all contribute to the national commitment towards building a green economy noting that Green Gicumbi project is one of the projects to support this journey.





Agroforestry for Livelihoods

More than 6 million trees will be planted including agroforestry trees, fruit trees and woodlots trees as well as indigenous species.



Rulindo and Bugesera residents set to benefit as ARCOS moves in to plant six million trees to improve Livelihoods and nature conservation

The Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network) is implementing a 20 year project known as “Agroforestry for Livelihoods” aimed to improve the well-being of the citizens in Rulindo and Bugesera District.

The launch of the project took place in Karambo Cell in Ngoma Sector in Rulindo District on October 28, 2020.

A total of 3898 agroforestry trees including 215 indigenous species (Mitragyna=Umuzibaziba; Markhamia=Umusave and Ficus=Umuwumu) were planted on 19,5 ha. This is the part of total project target to plant 6 million trees on 15,209 ha in Rulindo and Bugesera Districts over next 3 years

The project will also help in the fight against air pollution where more than three tons of polluted carbon dioxide (CO₂) will be filtered through trees and other activities

including land conservation and sustainable agriculture within these 20 years starting from January 2020.

The project is being implemented by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network) in an effort to protect the environment and improve the well-being of the people in the Albert Albert Rift Network in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of ‘The Environment and its agencies including the Forestry Authority and the Environmental Management Authority (REMA), Rulindo and Bugesera Districts and various other partners, with the support of French investors called “Livelihoods Funds.”

More than 6 million trees will be planted (Diversity of trees including indigenous), 15,209 ha restored, 3 million of tons of CO₂ sequestered in 20 years, 120,000



people and 30,000 households will benefit from project.

More than 5,000 jobs will be created, especially those related to environmental protection. 60% of the beneficiaries of this project are women and youth. More than 1,000 small groups of farmers will be set up to help each other and focus on sustainable development and ecosystems.

The Director of ARCOS Network, Dr. Kanyamibwa Sam, said the project is part of the process of tackling climate change.

“The project is part of the process of tackling climate change and will only be successful if trees are harvested properly and at the right time,” he said. “Community engagement is needed to achieve this.” He added

“The project will last for 20 years, in all those years it does not mean that the tree will not be harvested, the trees will be harvested when it is time.” Dr. Kanyamibwa explained

Mugabo Jean Pierre, Director of the Rwanda Forestry Authority, said that they had recently begun to develop an agroforestry planting program on nationwide scale. “It’s a nationwide program,” he said.

He reminded citizens to do participate in tree



planting exercise as early as the rainfall is there and that at least by the end of November the tree planting activities for this season would be over since the rainfall will start to decrease later, according to the National Weather Service.

He commended ARCOS Network for its continued contribution to the implementation of government programs, especially in the field of environmental protection and social welfare.



Sebeya's previous catchment plan remains relevant to the smooth progress of Sebeya Landscape Rehabilitation Project-Official

Official at the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has revealed that Sebeya Catchment Management Plan developed remains very important, highly relevant and valuable technical document that continues to inform IWRM interventions in Sebeya catchment.



IUCN's Landscape Restoration and IWRM Team Leader, Glenn Raynor, has told this website that the focus in Sebeya has shifted to a community approach, piloting participatory community-level planning and local-level ownership of Landscape Restoration and Integrated Water Resources Management processes. "The catchment plan is implemented through Village Land Use Action plans (VLUAPs) across the catchment," he said.

In the past, residents of Sebeya Catchment were prone to various disasters caused by Sebeya River that have claimed lives and various

infrastructures in addition to human activities.

In an effort to find a lasting solution to the problems in the Sebeya Catchment, the Government of Rwanda through Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) in collaboration the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) with financial support from Embassy of Netherland Kingdom conducted a study to highlight the urgency of the catchment rehabilitation.

Mr. Glenn Raynor said that since the launch of the new project phase in May 2019 the focus has

shifted to piloting a community approach, a cost-effective methodology that empowers the population to actively engage in embedding IWRM to produce Landscape and community benefits.” It is clear that the methodology selected in the implementation of the Sebeya Catchment Landscape Rehabilitation will be productive and there is hope that the main goal of the project will be achieved.

Landscape Restoration and IWRM measures in Sebeya are being implemented by the Rwanda Water

Resources Board (RWB) in collaboration with the districts of Rubavu, Nyabihu, Rutsiro and Ngororero with Technical Assistance (TA) from IUCN and SNV. However, he added that Implementation progress was impacted by unexpected disruptions due to COVID 19 emergency measures but concerted efforts are being made to catch up and deliver in accordance with established timeframes. The Sebeya Landscape Rehabilitation project aims at increasing livelihoods and conservation benefits in Sebeya & other catchments through restoration



and improved natural resources management where Sebeya Catchment is shared between Rubavu, Rutsiro, Nyabihu and Ngororero Districts.

The main tasks of IUCN includes coordination, planning, development of technical specifications, provision of Landscape Restoration and IWRM policy advice to inform decision makers, technical and quality monitoring of implemented measures and provision of capacity building to RWB, Districts staff and other structures mandated with supporting achievement of IWRM targets and finally knowledge management and documentation to scale best practices and lessons learned in Sebeya to other catchments across Rwanda.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) has set ambitious targets to become a middle-income state by 2030. This includes a set related sub-targets for water including increased access to hydroelectricity and 100% access to safe and clean water for all.

Experts said that with regards to landscape restoration and IWRM these measures must take into account local and macro level impacts of climate change. This includes mapping existing and future water needs and uses and ensuring that hydrological modelling is accurate and is kept up to date in accordance with changes to hydrology caused by climate change.



Mr. Glenn Raynor revealed that “the application of nature based solutions through strategic forest and landscape restoration combined with biophysical measures such as improved drainage infrastructure, gully protection, terracing and agro-forestry will be necessary to strengthen resilience but these measures must be designed using the best possible climate change data for them to be effective and fit for the purpose of helping control and dissipate intensifying run-off during predicted heavy rains.”

“At the same time measures will need to be designed to ensure that water resources are appropriately managed to ensure adequate supplies while preventing erosion and destruction of homes, crops and infrastructure by downstream flooding.” He noted





Miss Uwase calls for Investment in FLR youth movement as global challenge to ‘Restore Our Future’ takes momentum

By Ange de la Victoire DUSABEMUNGU restoration is key in tackling the climate crisis.

UWASE HIRWA Honorine, Miss Popularity Rwanda 2017 and AFR100 & IUCN-FLR Youth Ambassador as well as Founder of Youth FLR Movement has called for the tangible investments in Youth's Forests and Landscape Restoration movements if countries are to achieve the target of restoring over 210 million hectares of forest landscapes under the Bonn Challenge and creating an opportunity to boost climate ambition.

Uwase was speaking on Wednesday, 2nd September 2020 at a Virtual live panel discussion with youth climate activists addressing how forest landscape

The discussions were organized as part of the 24 hours global digital events to celebrate the first major milestone of the Bonn Challenge and the enormous impact of the forest landscape restoration (FLR) movement. This panel, streamed live on Youtube, explored the synergies between the youth climate movement and the Bonn Challenge and forest landscape restoration. Panelists discussed why restoration is important to them, including as a way to tackle the climate crisis.

On her turn, Uwase Honorine from Rwanda said “We need to invest in young people’s movements. They are people

that are supposed to reach out people...if we need to keep this going and give more effective results outcomes in this new decade that we started we need to invest and encourage this young movements that are raising”

She explained that FLR Youth movement Rwanda with the support of IUCN is trying to see “how we can invest in young people’s ideas, innovations and how we can support them in the implementation of those innovative ideas that they are going to bring on the table.”

“Commitment and consistence are important to achieve the target for this decade” She noted.

In Rwanda, young people have continuously showed appetite in joining various campaigns aiming to restore the nature.

From communication to on ground activities, youth are engaged in Environmental protection across the country.

However, lack of support has been one of challenges that are hindering the takeoff these challenges.

Charles Karangwa, IUCN Regional Technical Coordinator – Forests, landscapes and Livelihoods told TOPAFRICANEWS that resources scarcity is the main challenge to landscape restoration.

He said “It is indeed true that resources are scarce for environmental protection. We need to re-imagine sustainable finance and include actions that enhance nature-based solutions.”

Mr. Karangwa added that all investments in development sector should where possible optimize nature capacity to provide long lasting solutions.

“IUCN will continue to work with countries across the globe and Rwanda in particular to implement green finance solutions for people and nature.”

Karangwa said



Charles Karangwa answers 10 questions on Embedding Integrated Water Resource Management in Sebeya Catchment: “Church leaders also play an important role”

The Sebeya Catchment in Western Rwanda is facing a series of compounding crises. Steep, mountainous terrain, deforestation, mining exploitation, unsustainable agricultural practises combined and some of the heaviest rainfall in Rwanda results in extreme soil erosion, siltation and turbidity and downstream flooding result economic damage, loss of life and livelihoods. Sebeya Catchment’s population density is far in excess of the Rwandan national average of 400 people/km². Limited economic opportunities mean most people depend on subsistence farming on steep, unstable soils. Socio-economic problems are exacerbated by climate change, making an already fragile agricultural economy even more so.

The Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) (International Union for Conservation of Nature). in collaboration with International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) with funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Rwanda, is addressing the above mentioned challenges through the implementation of the

“Embedding Integrated Water Resource Management in Rwanda (EWMR)” Project across 4 administrative districts: Rubavu, Rutsiro, Ngororero and Nyabihu.

The EWMR project is designed around a participatory Community Approach. A bottom-up methodology that enables communities to implement measures specific to addressing issues at the village level with technical support from RWB, local governments and the EWMR consortium. Communities are empowered through Village Land Use Action Planning processes to identify local problems of landscape degradation and soil erosion caused by deforestation, unsustainable agricultural and mining practises that negatively impact on water quality. Village Land Use Action Plans detail remedial measures to restore landscapes and reverse the degradation.

TOPAFRICANEWS’s DUSABEMUNGU Ange de la Victoire has addressed the following 10 questions to Charles Karangwa to help us understand the real issues in Sebeya Catchment, how those issues are being addressed and how the work is conducted amid COVID 19 pandemic

Below are excerpts of our Interview:

What interventions will you start with?

We have started and intend to continue with catchment restoration measures. These include: radical and progressive terraces, agroforestry, trenches in forests and small gullies treatment

Who are going to do those activities?

Local communities are and will continue implementing these activities under direct guidance and coaching from Rwanda Water Board and districts level officers including social distancing during working hrs with technical support from IUCN

How is IUCN ready to avoid contamination of COVID 19 among those who are going to progress with the catchment rehabilitation?

Through the project, we will provide prevention means such as masks, gloves and sanitizers. We will ensure social distancing is adhered to when interacting with members of the public and project teams. The government of Rwanda safety guideline will be fully implemented.

Where are you so far in the project implementation after its official launch last year?

Charles Karangwa is the Regional Technical Coordinator/ Rwanda Country Representative, Forests, Landscapes and Livelihoods Programme, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office of IUCN. So far, we have worked with local communities to develop 107 Village Land Use Plans (VLUAPs) across all the 4 districts of the projects and these have started being implemented in December 2019 up to now



in Rubavu, Nyabihu, Ngororero and Rutsiro. The measures under implementations include among others radical and progressive terraces, river bank protections and work to reduce flooding in Mahoko. More than 600 people have been so far working on the project and more than 3000 people are expected to be involved in the next months. to restore landscapes and reverse the degradation.

Our News website has recently published an opinion entitled “What if the Sebeya Catchment plan is fully implemented...” the opinion was triggered by the flooding that happened recently, I would like to know which plans you have to make this catchment healthy and productive?

How do you think citizens can fully take a centre stage in the catchment rehabilitation?

By active involvement in catchment restoration plans through Village land use plans and real implementation of rehabilitation activities. For example, the EWMR project is designed around a participatory Community Approach. A bottom-up methodology that enables communities to implement measures specific to addressing issues at the village level with technical support from RWB, local governments and the EWMR consortium. Communities are empowered through Village Land Use Action Planning processes to identify local problems of landscape degradation and soil erosion caused by deforestation, unsustainable agricultural and mining practises that negatively impact water quality. Village Land Use Action Plans detail remedial measures

Through Implementation of catchment restoration measures (landscape restoration activities) in the whole Sebeya catchment. We already have Sebeya Catchment Management Plan, Village Land Use Action Plans helping implementation of catchment Plan and a total of additional 200 plans are expected to be developed across all districts in Sebeya. These will also be implemented during the project period (until end of 2022) We will also Implement protection structures on Sebeya river to mitigate floods (detailed studies and designs are available), as well as Payment for Ecosystem Service Scheme (PES) to ensure implemented activities are maintained for sustainability. The project will also hugely invest in people livelihoods through livestock distribution (small and big livestock such as Cows, goats, etc) but also through Value chain approach, the project will support small holder farmers to access the market systems.

How are religious and civil society organizations contributing to these environmental activities?

Church leaders are considered as opinion Leaders in Sebeya and cannot work without their support. During the project launch, churches represented by the Catholic Bishop of Nyundo Diocese committed to fully support mobilization during the lifetime of the project. They are contributing in project awareness and in communities' mobilisation; ensuring local communities are more involved in project activities implementation.

In which time-frame do you think the catchment will be fully rehabilitated?

The current investment will cover biophysical rehabilitation of the catchments through landscape restoration measures. However, there will be water management infrastructure to reduce water run offs and manage flooding as well. The project will also hugely invest in community education and sensitization for long-term ownership of these investments. However, we cannot guarantee that all problem will then be solved by end of 2022 but at least major threats will have been addressed and fixed. These efforts will continue and the government of Rwanda through ministry of environment, Rwanda Water Resources Board have prioritized these catchments and efforts will continue.

Can you tell us about financial resources being invested in the Sebeya catchment rehabilitation?

The current project, which is generously funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), has two windows:

6 million Euro allocated to Technical Assistance by the consortium of IUCN and SNV. This budget is used to prepare all upstream work including availing all necessary plans, feasibility studies and on ground technical assistance to ensure systematic response to problems facing Sebeya catchments.

It also involved engaging with both districts and other stakeholders to fully be mobilized and support the project.

Investment Fund 15 million Euro managed by the Government of Rwanda through Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) used to pay for works, goods and services eligible in the

framework of the EWMR Project implementation. Public funding from government also is fully involved to support work on the ground through districts and other government agencies.

Any other information that you would like to let the public know about Sebeya Catchment Rehabilitation?

Restoration is a long-term process to gain ecological functionality of the landscape/catchment. This work there will require collective efforts for all peoples involved from smallholder farmers, private sector operators, civil society, local government and all community involved. With these efforts together, it is very possible that using Rwandans home-grown solutions, and the available resources, the problems can be contained and fixed.

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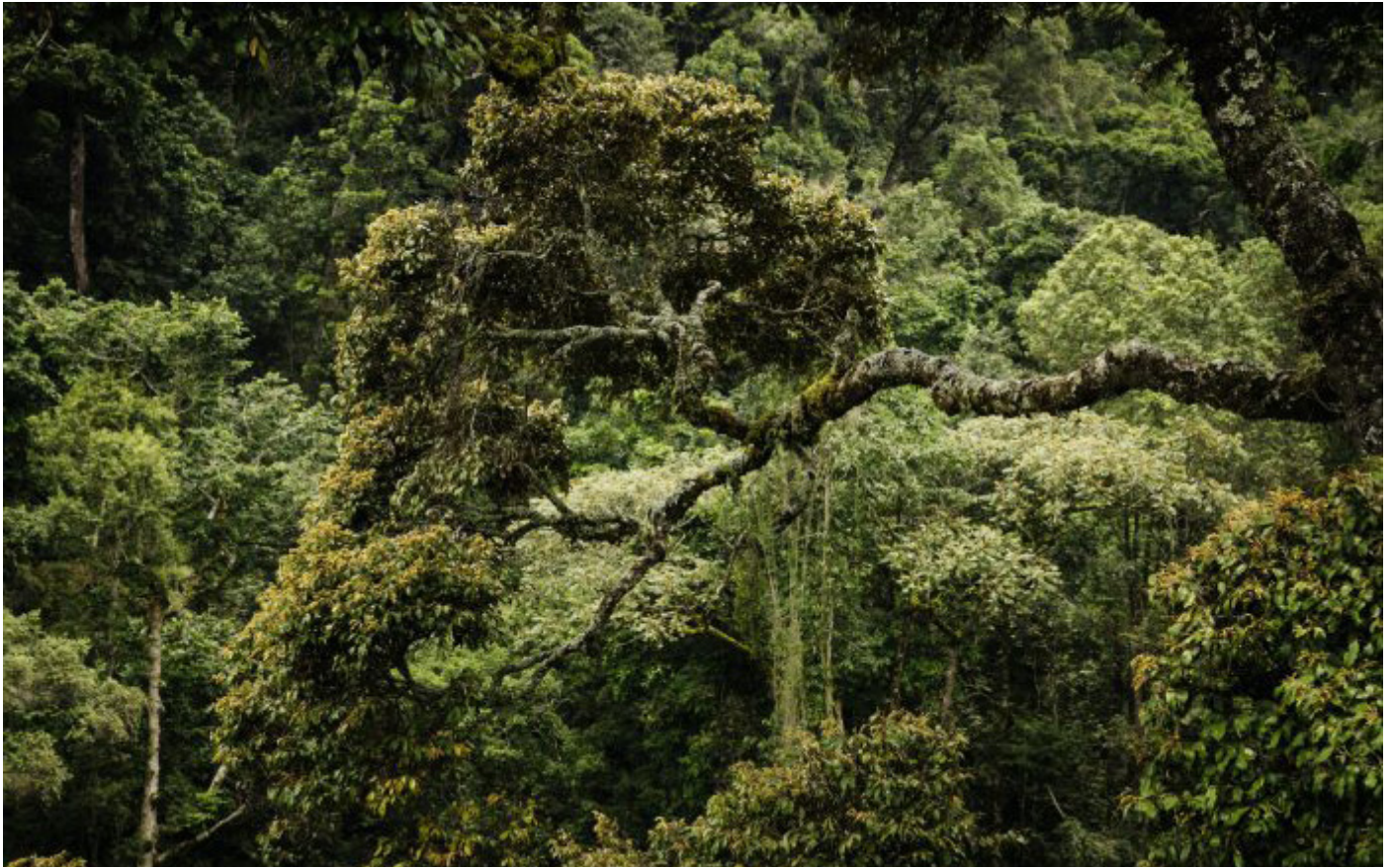
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Gishwati-Mukura Landscape officially approved as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



Rwanda's Mukura-Gishwati natural Forests has been officially approved as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, TOPAFRICANEWS reports.

The approval was welcomed by Rwandan authorities after this relatively young national park located in the Albertine Rift, a global biodiversity hotspot got the United Nations' approval.

Gishwati-Mukura Landscape covers the total area of 79,926 and comprises a core area of 3,558 ha, a buffer zone of 1,979 ha and a transition area of 74,389 ha.

Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, on Wednesday, 28th October, 2020, after getting the good news tweeted "Rwanda's Gishwati-Mukura Landscape has been designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Congratulations to all partners involved in this historic achievement including: the Global Environment Facility and World Bank! This will bring a range of benefits for local communities and biodiversity in Gishwati Mukura National Park" The Gishwati Mukura Forest is recognized for two primate species, which are endangered and endemic to the Albertine Rift among them are: The Eastern Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthi*) and the Golden monkey (*Cercopithecus (mitis) kandti*).

Other species in the area include carnivores (e.g. the Side-striped Jackal, *Canis adustus*), bats and small mammals. Floral species include three species of bryophytes (*Porella abyssinica*, *Leptoscaphus expansus* and *Cololejeunea parva*) occurring exclusively in Gishwati Forest.

With a population of 337,782, local communities' benefit from the park in terms of increased agricultural productivity through sustainable land management activities, silvopastoralism, agroforestry and tourism, under a benefit-sharing agreement signed with the communities, 10% of revenue generated is used in community development projects.

The UNESCO Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC) project, which has conducted various research and monitoring programmes in the area.



**Green Mayaga Forest
Landscape Restoration Project
to create 150,000 jobs for Locals**



The Green Mayaga Forest Landscape Restoration in the Mayaga region (FLR Mayaga) project is a ground-breaking six-year project initiative that will afforest the degraded ecosystem and restore the natural forests of four districts of Mayaga in Rwanda's southern Province by promoting biodiversity, fostering ecosystem services, increasing agriculture productivity and reducing the vulnerability of people and ecosystems to the adverse effects of climate change.

The project will improve the livelihoods of local communities, increase agricultural productivity and food security, create green jobs as well as promote gender equality and expand forest management knowledge.

Based on the statistics, more than 1 million and three hundred thousand among them 360,000 people will directly benefit from the project, the majority of whom are women and young people.

Wibabare Divine is a young girl who is currently working in the Nursery Tree

in Kinazi sector of Ruhango District.

She says that as a Student even though it is still in the early days of the project but she has already benefited from the nursery preparation process.

“As a Student, the preparatory stage of project has been an answer for me. Now I’m not afraid to go back to school because I am able to buy school materials, thanks to the job I got here at nursery” She says

Wibabara added that as a member of the young generation, she also wants to see the Mayaga region green with fresh air as opposed to the high temperatures in the area.

Apart from Wibabara and many others who have started to benefit from the site preparatory activities, the project will create approximately 150,000 jobs during the six years of implementation and provide 7,500 households with livestock to improve food security and increase incomes.

In addition, 60,000 households will be provided with improved and energy efficient cook stoves to reduce wood consumption while at the same time reduce greenhouse gases emissions and halt indoor airborne diseases.

Officials revealed that overall, the FLR Green Mayaga project will advance the restoration of the degraded forests in the area, the landscape of which covers more than 550 hectares, or 0.14% of Rwanda’s total national natural forests, 10% of the planted forest as well as many patches of remnant forest.



The Mayaga region which is about to be restored, is often characterised by a variety of challenges including soil erosion, deforestation and high temperature which have a negative impact on yields while the region was formerly a food basket for the Rwandan market and ‘especially in the city of Kigali.

Theophile Dukuzeyezu, Project site coordinator in Ruhango District, says that they have chosen trees compatible with local soil so there is no doubt that these trees will not produce the expected results.

“That’s why we as technicians are here. We are well aware of the types of trees that are needed, and we are aware of the impacts so that we are generally confident that if these trees are properly monitored, they will inevitably be productive for both fruit trees, timber and erosion control.” She says.

The Green Mayaga Forest Landscape Restoration project is supported by the Global

Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is being implemented by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) in partnership with the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA) and the districts of Kamonyi, Ruhango, Nyanza and Gisagara.

The Mayaga region hosts the 354-hectare natural forest of Kibirizi-Muyira as well as the Busoga forest reserves.

Regarding climate adaptation and resilience, the project will strengthen the resilience of communities and biodiversity and contribute to climate change stabilization particularly in the District of Kamonyi, Ruhango, Nyanza and Gisagara.

The Green Mayaga project will also increase the erosion control and protection of marshlands and buffer zones and this will also increase agriculture productivity.

In total, 263,000 hectares of agricultural land will be restored and rehabilitated. Small and large watersheds will also be rehabilitated and restored to provide water for human consumption as well as livestock and agriculture activities.

TOP AFRICA NEWS REPORT

Rwanda Miners seek to revive the Mining and Extraction Industry as COVID 19 continues to pose threats



Rwanda Mining industry has not been spared out by the effects of COVID 19 despite quick resumption of mining activities after the Government announced partial removal of lockdown in May 2020.

This was revealed on Sunday, 30 August 2020 during the TV talk show on BTN TV where representatives of the Industry were discussing the status of Mining sector during COVID 19 pandemic period.

Among the Invited guests to the Sunday's show were the Secretary General of Rwanda Extractives Workers Union Mr. Mutsindashyaka Andre, Vice Chairperson of Rwanda Miners

Association, Mr Leonidas Simpenzwe as well as the Mining Extraction and Inspection Division Manager in Rwanda Mining Board, Mr. Donat Nsengumuremyi.

According to Mr. Mutsindashya, the mining sector was one of the economic sectors that were heavily affected by the corona virus outbreak.

He revealed that after mining activities were resumed following the partial removal of lockdown, as of May 2020, about 40,000 workers in the mining Extraction sector regained their job.

However, Mr. Mutsindashyaka noted that there are also some

others who were not able to return to work due to Health guidelines which stipulate that the workplace should be attended by the minimum number of workers to avoid possible spread of Corona Virus.

“When you look for instance from June 2020 until now, you will appreciate that really a lot of activities have resumed in the mining sites. It is very commendable because those who are working are now able to feed their families.” He said.

Among the very many impacts highlighted during the talk show, there are the decrease of prices on the International market which was due to the fact that

the manufacturing companies such as cars manufactures, or electronics companies stopped or decreased their activities following the border closure in all countries.

According to the Mining Extraction and Inspection Division Manager in Rwanda Mining Board, Mr. Donat Nsengumuremyi, “the mining sector as any other business sectors has been affected by COVID 19.”

He said “However, Rwanda Mining Board has intervened by putting in place guidelines to be followed during the work resumptions as well as conducting more inspections to check if the guidelines are being followed.”

Mr. Nsengumuremyi explains that all of the measures were taken to prevent disorganised activities which would have violated COVID19 prevention measures since workers would start rushing for production quantity while violating prevention measures.

He added that currently the Rwanda Mining Board is working closely with members of Private Sector to find solutions to the challenges imposed by COVID 19.

They cite for instance lack of extractive equipment which followed the closure of Borders and International trade.

However, the Vice Chairperson of Rwanda Miners Association, Mr Leonidas Simpenzwe noted that after facing lack of equipment, the Government of Rwanda has Intervened where some equipments were released and there have been quick customs clearance which led to the reduction of the burden caused by the shortage of extractive equipment.

Mr. Simpenzwe said “For instance when Corona Virus outbroken there were no sufficient underground extraction tools because it was almost impossible to import those equipments and those which were already ordered have delayed because the borders were closed and businesses closed across the country. However, the Government intervened and later we have some reaching the mining sites.”



The mining sector is the second after the tourism sector to generate a lot of revenues for Rwanda’s economic growth.

In Rwanda, Cassiterite (Tin), Wolfram (Tungsten), and Coltan (Tantalum) 3Ts of which the country is ranked among the top producers have been hit most.

Statistics shows that revenue exports of 3Ts decreased by 30.9% due to the drop in International commodity prices in January and February 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.



Global emissions now down by 7%

London, November 3, 2020 – On the opening day of the virtual e-LPG Week, Dr. Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), addressed attendees about the role of energy in the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic has been huge, with declines in energy usage of around 5% and some 20% reduction in investment, a situation not seen since World War II. Corresponding expected drops in global emissions of around 7% are the biggest in history but, as Dr. Birol reported, this is not necessarily good news.

“This decline (in emissions) is not happening because of the right energy policies or new technologies” stated Dr. Birol, “this is happening because of the economic meltdown around the world. Low economic growth is not a low emission strategy” and if governments do not take the right measures to push emissions down, as the global economy recovers, emissions will return to previous levels, added Dr. Birol.

Dr. Birol went on to say, “We are very well aware of the critical role of LPG in industry, in transportation and most importantly in households across the world, especially in the emerging world. To date about 2.6 billion people, 5 times the population of Europe, have no access to clean cooking. They are using coal, kerosene, agricultural waste, animal waste in certain cases, for cooking. And this is one of the top three reasons, according to a study we carried out with the World Health Organization (WHO), for premature deaths around the world because of the respiratory diseases that it causes and here, of course, LPG can be a very important option to address this problem and we have seen several good examples.”

The WHO estimates that nearly four million people die prematurely each year from illnesses attributed to polluted household air. LPG is an important and immediate solution to this problem, which not only improves

air quality but also lowers global carbon emissions, stops increasing deforestation and improves the lives of women and children.

One example of policy that has gained global recognition for helping poorer families access green cooking fuel, is that of the Indian government with its Ujjwala program. In his address to e-LPG Week, Mr. Shikrant Madhav Vaidya, Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), spoke about the success of this program and the importance of e-LPG Week in forming policies and strategy at both global and local level. He said, “During the pandemic, the scheme has been invaluable in giving relief to vulnerable sections of society through national lockdown.”

The Indian government gave three free refills of LPG cylinders between the months of April and June to those below the poverty line. Mr. Vaidya went on to say, “LPG has become an indispensable part of the Indian kitchen, with a

surge in demand over lockdown of around 17%.”

While offering a life-changing solution to rural communities and a way of lowering global emissions, Dr. Birol continued to explain how the LPG community can do more in terms of increasing the availability of renewable LPG. He praised several refineries for their efforts in processing renewable feedstock into various oil products, including bioLPG and concluded that “bioLPG is still in modest quantities but it can, and promises to, play a greater role in years to come.”

Mr. Vaidaya concluded by summarizing the importance of new energy. While acknowledging the roles of hydrogen and CNG, he said, “LPG plays a vital role in the continuing use of clean energy and ensuring inclusive growth and enhanced sustainability.

e-LPG Week, a week-long virtual event organised by the World LPG Association, runs online until 6th November 2020, providing a crucial platform for industry experts and leaders to discuss this clean energy solution and the pathway for the future.

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