

TOPAFRICA NEWS

Green Magazine



WHO IS WHO IN
GREENING RWANDA?

About TOP AFRICA NEWS

Top Africa News.com is a Private shareholder Digital News Website managed by AFRICA NEWS DIGEST Ltd, a Domestic Company registered in Rwanda Development Board.

Available on www.topafricanews.com, this website publishes stories from across Africa focusing on Environment, Natural resources, Livestock and Agriculture, Tourism and conservation, Climate Change, Youth, and Culture, Peace Building, Health, Infrastructure and ICT, Security, Education, Business and Banking.

The main objective of this website is to tell the World the real Africa’s Story from the real and reliable sources. We Publish News Stories, Supplements stories, advertorials, Feature stories among many others.

We are based in Kigali, Rwanda.

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We want to recruit at least two staff (A journalist and a marketing agent).

We want to purchase audio, video recording and editing equipment. As we have been very active using little means that has served us in its capacity, once this funding is available, we will also use part of it to make it easier for our journalists to reach in person to local sources at grassroots level. Let us support TOP AFRICA NEWS to make a difference.

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The critical issue we face is how to better leverage interventions in water, energy and food sectors to further green our economies and at the same time achieve sustainable development. I believe the first solution lies in enhanced management of what we have and finding innovative ways of producing more with the limited resources. The modern technologies at our disposal provide the means to do this. What we need is the common understanding and political will to use them.

PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME, Bonn, 16 November 2011

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales commends ARCOS Network for conservation initiatives

By Ange de la Victoire DUSABEMUNGU

Charles, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales has commended the work of the ARCOS Network that aims to protect biodiversity and sustainable natural resources management.

On his visit to Rwanda for the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which is taking place in Rwanda , His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales paid a visit to one of ARCOS' sites in Bugesera to witness a collaborative landscape restoration for

climate resilience in Rwanda.

Among the activities visited by Prince Charles on Tuesday include some of the ARCOS tree nurseries that are set to expand afforestation programs, provide agroforestry species while at the same time protecting and conserving the biodiversity and enhancing the livelihoods of the local community.

In his message posted on Twitter after the visit, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales said that It was "Wonderful to see the good work of the Albertine Rift Conservation Society, which

aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources."

During the Royal visit, Prince Charles talked to local communities and had first hand information on what ARCOS is doing in favour of environmental and Biodiversity conservation.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was accompanied by Rwanda's Minister of Environment Dr. Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, ARCOS Executive Director, Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa and many other delegates.



His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales has commended the work of the ARCOS Network

The Executive Director of the ARCOS Network who is also the Founder of this conservation organization, Dr Sam Kanyamibwa said that "The visit is a paramount to ARCOS as it serves as a good occasion to exchange with His Highness a subject,

he has cherished all his life about the role of grassroots communities as custodians of our mother land in the journey to sustainability."

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

highlighted that "For many years, Bugesera District experienced deforestation, severe drought and other climate change effects that led to extreme food shortage, loss of biodiversity and water resources across many freshwater ecosystems

including the lake Cyohoha race towards landscape change, creating green jobs, North....” adding that “The restoration is not only about boosting productivity and improving communities’ livelihoods but most importantly, remarkable results we see on this building resilience to climate change. integrating indigenous tree species in Rwanda’s agrosystem need to be replicated”.

For Dr. Sam Kanyamibwa, AR- ing the local community to build resilience to climate change. COS contribution to the country’s build resilience to climate tem,” He said.



Rwanda’s Minister of Environment, Dr. Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya speaking to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales



The Executive Director of the ARCOS Network who is also the Founder of this conservation organization, Dr Sam Kanyamibwa together with Prince Charles

Musanze: Scientists, Researchers meet to find solutions to Global Ecosystem Protection Challenges

By Justin Kayiranga and Ange de la Victoire DUSABEMUNGU

From 8th-10th June, 2022, Scientists, researchers in various fields related to the environment, policy makers and Government officials have convened in the third Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Africa Regional conference which took place in Musanze District in the Northern Province of Rwanda to exchange knowledge and research data that could help in finding long-term solutions to the problems facing the global ecosystem protection efforts.

The conference which was organized by the Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Rwanda and IUCN in Rwanda was also an opportune time to share experiences and best practices around the importance of ecosystem services for the transition

to sustainable economies and natural capital accounting.

Commenting on the happening of such an important conference, Mr. Charles Karangwa, IUCN Regional Head, Land Systems and Country Representative, Kenya said that “the world economy as a whole is, as you know, based largely on the natural resources in which we depend on.”

“So this meeting aims to look at how we can take care of the nature we depend on so that it can also help us meet our needs.” He explained.

“As you know, whether it's food, agricultural products, the economy as a whole, other services have a lot in common with how we care about nature.” He added.

Mr. Karangwa also emphasised that “The air we breathe and the addition of Disasters we encounter and how we can stop them, all have to do with the Earth itself and how we conserve the Mother Earth or the ecosystem.”

The conference, therefore, brings together African researchers, and those from major European universities, South America and others, as well as Central America, NGOs and International Organizations, representatives of African countries to really talk about the role of the world in general in the protection of natural resources that help humanity to live better.



Third ESP Africa Regional Conference Group Photo

The meeting also discussed the issue of climate change and how researchers and decision-makers are working

together to find a solution to the problem of climate change. Ms. Ingabire Diane, a representative of the Ecosystem Service Partnership whose Headquarters

is in the Netherlands and also the Conference Manager, said that this is a great opportunity for people to meet and share their knowledge of research with a view to finding solutions to existing problems.

She asserted that the conference is also another time to identify together existing gaps that can hinder the maximum protection of Natural ecosystem.

She said “for example you can ask as a citizen what the role of nature is? Or what’s the role of that tree for her/him? Many may not be aware of it.”

“This is where the idea of organizing such conferences comes from so that researchers can meet with leaders, policy makers, or policymakers to share those ideas and research data that can contribute to the fullest protection of the environment and its natural ecosystem” Ms Ingabire explained.

Speaking to the Media, Dr. Beth Kaplin, the director of the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity & Natural Resource Management at the University of Rwanda said that “we really want to work hard to protect the biodiversity and the functioning healthy ecosystems we rely on.” She



Dr. Beth Kaplin, the director of the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity & Natural Resource Management at the University of Rwanda

added that “everything we do as humans comes from those functioning ecosystems and then overlaying that we have climate change.”

“So we know that temperatures are warming and we know that rainfall is changing. In some cases, it is heavier, it can be unpredictable, and it can be less than normal. So that is affecting species and the ecosystem functioning. So there are many things we can do to make our ecosystems stronger” said Dr. Kaplin.

She revealed that the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity & Natural Resource Management at the University of Rwanda is developing the first national Rwanda biodiversity Information System, which is holding biodiversity data that will be accessible to the public and that will help them to make informed decisions.

“For example, if you want to develop an area, certain land use planning, environmental impact assessments can use that information. Where are the certain species that are indicators of healthy functioning ecosystems? Where do we need to do some restoration interventions? And so this information system is being developed to support that kind of work and decision making” She explained.

Speaking at the opening session of the Conference, Mr. Patrick Karera, and the Permanent Secretary in Rwanda’s Ministry of Environment said that “We cannot sustain the development to which we aspire if natural ecosystem processes and functionalities are disrupted.”

He noted that “Ecosystem processes are of a very high value to human and countries economy.”, adding: “The natural ecosystem processes provide basic conditions for human existence including opportunities for



Mr. Patrick Karera, and the Permanent Secretary in Rwanda’s Ministry of Environment



Some of the participants at the third ESP Africa Regional Conference

agriculture, forest resources, productive land and seas, quality water, clean air, climate regulation and protection from disasters.”

However, he said, degradation of the ecosystem has a detrimental impact on the entire society, affecting its economy, the health of people, and putting the entire socio-ecological system at risk.

“We thank the Ecosystem Services Partnership to have prioritized discussion and cooperation amongst stakeholders working in the field of ecosystem services. It is a noble initiative that we wish to feed the action required to keep the world’s ecosystems safe and functional.” Mr. Karera said.

He also highlighted that “The Government of Rwanda values the importance of biological diversity for a successful sustainable growth

of the economy. Policies, strategies and laws were put in place to provide guidance on appropriate management, enforcement and implementation of best practices.”

Rwanda wants to strengthen integration of natural capital accounting and valuation of ecosystem services into the national development planning framework.

“We developed for example the Natural Capital Accounts for land, water, minerals and recently, ecosystems.” He said.

“Through this ESP Africa Conference, we expect practical recommendations that trigger effective actions on conservation of nature, improvement of livelihoods and sustainable economic investment in natural capital.” Mr. Karera concluded.

Turning Bugesera Green through Agroforestry and Solar powered Irrigation



By Justin Kayiranga

Bugesera district which was drought-stricken, is now becoming a productive land thanks to the government’s green climate initiatives and policies implemented in that part of the Eastern Province of Rwanda.

The impacts of the extreme droughts caused by deforestation issues in Bugesera district in the early 2000s, pushed many of its residents to migrate to other parts of the country looking for work to help them survive.

Reports show that no single crop was productive in the 2000 and the entire region depended on external food supplies as stated in Bugesera Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) which was conducted by Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) in January 2007.

To address this issue, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has initiated different projects which assisted in changing the narratives of this region and brought back life dependence.

Among these initiatives, Top Africa News has picked 2 components that seem to be leading the transformation of Bugesera district.

Introduction of Agroforestry and afforestation

Not only in Bugesera district, but also in all parts of Rwanda, where you will meet people who had the impression that they could not mix trees and other crops, as it results in low production.

However, since the GoR and its partners introduced the agroforestry among residents, especially farmers, in Bugesera and explained its better practice, residents today praise the initiative by testifying how it has improved and eased their farming activities.

Mr. Habihiwe Diogène, a resident of Musenyi sector, says he was also one of the people that had little knowledge about agroforestry species, only after being trained and given trees to plant, he has now started to reap the benefits.

“I used to cultivate and when it rains it damages my crops due to erosion which also took over the soil. But after planting

agroforestry plants, now there is no more erosion, the soil has become productive and the production has also increased.” He said.

“Before I used to harvest less than 50 Kilograms of beans on a 40 acres land but now, I can also harvest about 100 Kilograms,” Habihiwe added.

Mushumba Frederic, also says the tree planting program has solved many of their daily needs. “We did not expect the trees to grow here in Musenyi sector, but the government and its partners have brought various species and we are planting them, now they have grown and we are getting and breathing fresh air.” He said.

So far, in Bugesera, agroforestry covers around 80% of all cultivated land according to the district report.

Solar-powered irrigation system

As a low rainfall area, a spatial analysis of the land cover for 2000 by Bugesera IEA shows that



Habibirwe Diogène – A Farmer in Musenyi sector

crop lands have expanded into areas previously occupied by wetlands.

This conversion into agricultural farms has negatively affected the supply of direct ecosystem services such as water and fuel wood.

This has also been blamed for the changing micro-climate with the most visible being the disappearance/drainage of Lake Cyohoha North, which depended on surrounding wetlands for water. Farming in Marshlands was mainly due to the fact that cultivation in the upper side was not productive as there was no water and little rainfall at that time.

Eng. Mukunzi Emile, an environmental officer in Bugesera district, said a plan was being devised to make it easier for farmers to irrigate their hills, as it was already clear that swamps were drying up due to the agriculture.

“We wanted to make sure there is a rational use of water, so we thought about using solar energy to pump water from the swamp to the community cultivated areas.” Mukunzi said.

Mareba sector in Bugesera district, is one of the areas in which this type of irrigation has been introduced. Some farmers in the Komezimihigo cooperative say that it has been the solution for them as they are no longer in a state of disrepair and their yields have increased compared to the previous one.

Speaking to TOP AFRICA NEWS, Ms. Ntabanganyimana Beatha, one of the members of the cooperative, said: “The solar powered irrigation system has helped us so much. We have farms in more than 500 meters from the marshland our crops are good, thanks to the improved irrigation system”

Apart from the two facts stated above, in Bugesera also, they instated another initiative of community environment volunteers (Imboni z’ibidukikije), at village level, that will be serving in mobilizing fellow residents in the environmental protection run that will keep transforming Bugesera into a climate resilient region which is also in line with Rwanda’s climate action vision to become a climate resilient nation by 2050.



Ntabanganyimana Beatha – Member of Komezimihigo farmers cooperative

Rwanda: Francois Tetero elected GWP Eastern Africa Chairperson



Mr. Tetero took over from Mr. Peter Macharia, the Outgoing Chairperson of the CP and Regional Steering Committee for the Global Water Partnership for the Eastern Africa Region

Kigali-Rwanda: Francois Tetero, an expert in the GWP Eastern Africa is and its partners management and use of currently composed strive to promote water resources, has been of nine Country Water the Integrated elected Chairperson Partnerships (Burundi, Water Resources of the Global Water Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Management Partnership for the Eastern Kenya, Rwanda, (IWRM) approach Africa Region. Somalia, Sudan and to foster the Uganda) and counts coordination, development and management of water resources for sustainable

Mr. Tetetero received over 200 partners development and the Chairmanship during operating in these management of the GWP Eastern Africa Countries. water resources

–7th Regional Consulting for sustainable Partners Meeting which GWPEA works with develop was held in Kigali on these country water ment. Friday, 17th June 2022. partnerships to address

GWP Eastern Africa was and environmental constituted in 2003 by challenges such as stakeholderstosupportthe drought, floods, food sustainable development insecurity, climate and management of change and water water resources at all insecurity.



How Rwanda is using climate change data and projections to plan a sustainable future

In 2011, Rwanda adopted a Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy to become a developed, climate-resilient and low-carbon economy by 2050. To achieve this goal, the government and its stakeholders are working to reduce emissions, adapt to climate change and foster resilience. Rwanda is a low income country that remains highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, further complicating the path to reaching its ambitious target of becoming a high-income nation by 2050.

According to the World Bank's Rwanda Climate Risk Country Profile (2020), climate change impacts play negatively on the country's efforts to achieve sustainable development. While the country experienced robust economic growth leading to a drop in poverty rate from 39.1% in 2014 to 38.1% in 2017, the World Bank notes that Rwanda is still highly vulnerable to impacts from climate change through its high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, as well as need to improve its road networks, health sector and water resource management.

Rwanda's Updated Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDC) also notes that the country is increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change. Over the years, rainfall has become increasingly intense and the variability is predicted to increase by 5% to 10%. Records

of temperature increases show that between 1971 and 2016 the country recorded rises in mean temperature of between 1.4°C and 2.56°C. These changes in temperature and precipitation are said to be the key drivers of climate and weather-related disasters that negatively affect Rwandans and the overall economy, including windstorms, lightning, droughts, floods, landslides and storms. These climate-induced disasters result in damages to infrastructure, loss of lives and property including crops, soil erosion, and water pollution, among others.

According to Rwanda's Ministry in charge of Emergency Management, Rwanda experienced around 3,309 of disasters within the period of 2011-2019. In 2018 alone, the country recorded 254 deaths linked to climate-

induced disasters and a loss of 15,910 houses and 13,337.21 hectares of damaged crops. In 2020, disasters caused 298 deaths and 414 injuries, amongst other losses. The 2015 National Risk Atlas estimated the economic cost of the assets vulnerable to landslide and earthquake to be 100.3 billion Rwandan francs.

Owing to this situation, Rwanda has learnt that climate projections are important for future planning and for adapting to climate change. The climate system is very complex and so looking at past trends alone and expecting the situation to remain the same would be misleading and an overgeneralisation. For Rwanda, investing into globally recognized climate models to project the future climate is important to come up with strategies, plans and actions that responds to future needs and support the targets of achieving a sustainable, climate-resilient economy in the future. One of the programmes of action of the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy is 'Climate Data and Projections', which was designed to maintain climate change records and provide data to help the country prepare for a warmer world through new technologies and capacity building.

Having access to climate data and projections is essential for Rwanda to respond to climate change using evidence-based policy making and planning. Therefore, a number of institutions came together to track and manage climate related data, including the Rwanda Meteorological Agency (Meteo Rwanda), the Ministry of Education, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, the Rwanda Green Fund and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This joint effort includes regular measurements, weather forecast, data management, information sharing and climate knowledge and education.

Work is underway to build Rwanda's capacity to advance the national adaptation planning process and is being implemented by Meteo Rwanda and the Rwanda Environment Management Authority. One of the activities under this partnership is climate change projections for Rwanda on different timescale such as 2030, 2040, 2050 and 2080. Those projections will be used to develop climate risk assessments and to inform policy-makers and planners about probable future climate risks. In addition to this ground-breaking project, here are three other initiatives that are enabling Rwanda to better understand its climate today and more accurately predict



Recently, torrential rains destroyed schools in Karongi District

how it will change into the future.

Rwanda Climate Change Observatory

The Rwanda Climate Change Observatory is a world-class project initiated in 2011 by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the MIT to measure climate change on Mount Mugogo in terms of greenhouse gases (GHG), meteorological parameters, other climate change factors as well as building skills in storing, processing and archiving GHG data from different sectors. The Climate Change Observatory is part of WMO's Global Atmosphere Watch network measuring greenhouse gases and air quality. As a World Meteorological Organisation Global Atmosphere Watch station, it contributes to an international network of observation systems supporting the global response to climate change. This initiative has strengthened research on climate change and atmospheric sciences, presented education opportunities for Rwandans and trained them on effective climate data maintenance and analysis.

Investing in Meteo Rwanda forecasting and climate modelling

The Rwanda Meteorology Agency (Meteo Rwanda) provides accurate, timely weather and climate information services for safety of life, property and for socio-economic development of the country. The agency collects, gathers and accesses meteorological data from weather stations around the country. The data are analysed in parallel with data from other sources to generate the weather forecast of different ranges of time (nowcast,



short, medium and long ranges forecast), Meteorology Agency. The countrywide air quality monitoring system provides data on the quality of the air in twenty-three sites across the country. The Air Quality Monitoring System was developed through the Air Quality and Climate Change Monitoring Project, which has been funded by the Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA). It was designed in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology and implemented by Rwanda Environment Management Authority and the Ministry of Education. The system provides real-time Air Quality Index (AQI) for each station in both numerical and color code format. The system highlights the dominant air pollutant which is responsible for air quality degradation during the reported period for each station. It will help Rwanda to compare ground observations data with satellite data through remote sensing technology to verify their accuracy. The system strengthens Rwanda's existing field installed air quality monitoring network by providing online access to pollution readings from each station as well as data management including data sharing mechanisms.

Given the importance of weather and climate data for responding to climate change, significant investments have been made to boost the capacity of Meteo Rwanda. This has been done through an investment from the Rwanda Green Fund called 'Strengthening Rwanda's Weather and Climate Services to Support Development'. This initiative provided new monitoring equipment and increased the technical skills that lead to improvement of the range of weather and climate information available to inform decision making at all levels in Rwanda. This project installed climate change and air quality monitoring infrastructure and provided training to inform decision-making and enforcement activities. The infrastructure provides data for regulators and is being used as a research tool in higher learning institutions. Data is now being provided to climate modellers to increase climate change consequence modelling in Rwanda and across the region.

Building a nationwide Air Quality Index

Rwandans can now access real-time air quality information thanks to a new website and mobile application launched by the Ministry of Environment, Rwanda Environment Management Authority and Rwanda

Visit the Air Quality Monitoring System here:

Website: www.aq.rema.gov.rw
Mobile App (Android): <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=rw.gov.rema.aqi>
Learn more about Rwanda's efforts to use data to prepare for the future at www.meteorwanda.gov.rw.

Exclusive Interview with John Foster, the Rwanda-U.S Embassy's Economic Officer in charge of agriculture, energy, climate, youth, and labour

Last Week TOP AFRICA NEWS had an exclusive Interview with John Foster, the first tour Economic Officer at the US Embassy in Kigali to discuss various Environment initiatives that the U.S is supporting in Rwanda. Although the interview focused on Air Quality Monitoring, throughout the discussions, John Foster also tackled other sectors including Energy, climate change, food security among others.



John Foster is in charge of agriculture, energy, climate, youth, and labour.

Before starting our conversation? Tell us who you are?

Sure, well, and first of all, once again, thank you for interviewing me today. I am really excited to discuss a topic that's near and dear to my heart and that's also a priority of the US Embassy in Rwanda: Climate change and the importance of climate.

A little bit about myself. I'm John Foster. I'm a first tour Economic Officer here at the US Embassy in Kigali, Rwanda and in the embassy, I cover agriculture, energy, climate, youth, and labour.

So, all five of those topics have some climate focus to it. And so, I'm really looking forward to having this conversation today.

What is your comment on the management of environment and nature conservation in Rwanda?

Sure, I arrived in Kigali last June and since then, I've had the opportunity to go to Akagera national Park as well as Umusambi village, just two examples. And I'm just so impressed with the conservation efforts that the government of Rwanda has undertaken thus far and we can see that climate is a priority not only for Rwanda, but also for the United States as well.

Now, could you tell us about the U.S Embassy's Air Quality Monitoring Equipment?

So, the air quality monitor: to give you an overview of what the air quality monitor is: it's a joint effort between the US Department of

State and the US Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, and what the air quality monitor is, as it's a programme overseas and many US embassies, I believe right now, it's over 60 US embassies have installed an air quality monitor on top of the embassy roof.

And what that is: it's an opportunity for more information on what the air quality is in a given city and this information is public, and it's available to anyone that's interested. So, whether you're in Kigali or Kayonza, or Karachi or Kabul, anyone can access the data and I want to be clear on what the air quality programme is and what it isn't.

What it is: it's another opportunity for information sharing. It's public. It's just to show individuals, not just US diplomats and their families, but also Rwandans, what is the air quality for today? What it isn't: it's not an opportunity to contradict or lecture the government of Rwanda on air quality or the challenges it faces when it comes to air quality but rather, it's just a show, it's information sharing, which I believe is very important to having an open conversation of what are the challenges facing air quality? And how are there opportunities to solve those challenges?

Sure, may go into details, how the Air quality Monitor stationed at the U.S Embassy roof is going to support Rwanda in terms of Climate Change?

This is the main topic I would love to discuss at length. It is the importance of air quality. So let me just take a step back. First and foremost, Rwanda, United States are champions of climate. We are partners when it comes to addressing the issues that we're facing when it comes to climate change. For starters, on the US side, on President Biden first day in office, he rejoined the Paris Agreement that just shows the United States 'strong support in dealing with climate change. We also see our Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, who stated that climate and science diplomacy can no longer just be add-ons to our foreign policy towards.

It has to be a priority and everything we do when it comes to foreign policy and you see the government of Rwanda having an overarching whole government effort when it comes to fighting climate change for instance, you can see the Rwanda Environment Management Agency (REMA), they are leaders on this issue and they show that in Rwanda, they have an ambitious climate agenda and their climate

action agenda is important to just see that Rwanda, a small geographic country, but already showing that they want to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by over 30%. I believe it's 38% by 2030. And so, you just see the importance and the focus, the laser focus that the United States in Rwanda has, when it comes to mitigating climate effects, things are in our control, and things are not in our control.

And so, when we look at the importance of air pollution, and why it matters: it affects all of us, it affects you, it affects me as an individual, but also as a society.

So, let's start with the health effects of how air pollution can affect us. I have an eight-month-old daughter and my wife, we love to explore the city of Kigali, there are some beautiful landscapes, and we love to go out. However, when we look at the air quality monitor, we can see that there are some times where the air quality may not be the best and so we shape our day around that.

And so, if there's a moment where air quality might be in the red, because there might be an increase in vehicle emissions, neighbours may be cooking using the charcoal or wood that may have a detrimental effect to those that are sensitive to respiratory issues and so same thing to everyday Rwandans, you know, maybe it stays not the best day to go for a run, it might be better to go for a walk. And I saw a few months ago, the Rwandan Ministry of Health had an article that talked about over 3000 Rwandans a year passing away because of air pollution diseases, because of respiratory illnesses.

So that affects us as an individual, the health, but also there's the economic impact.

Back in 2016, the World Bank did a study that the deaths associated to air pollution related diseases was over \$226 billion lost in labour revenue and so you see, more importantly, the health effects that it has on each and every person but also you see the economic impact that it may have on a country as a government.

And so, there's this nexus that we have to look at how can we combat air pollution? How can we look at finding solutions to lessening the detrimental effects of air pollution? So, it's a priority that affects all of us in different capacities.

We believe that this air quality monitor allows anyone to have access to the information and that's what it is. It's a partnership, information sharing between the government of Rwanda and the United States Government on the importance of air quality.

One can think that the reason why you brought your Air Quality Monitor is because Rwanda's Air Quality Monitoring system is not working properly. Is this the real fact?

There are two reasons. One, I do believe that having an additional data point of another air quality monitor will assist and benefit Rwandans just as much as it will Americans.

I do not think that the air quality that was being produced, the data was insufficient. I believe that Rwanda has a robust air quality monitoring system. This is just another opportunity to share another data point on the importance of Air quality and I believe that having that ongoing conversation with our remote colleagues is important. It's not just this is what the United States is saying when it comes to climate, but, where's the conversation. REMA has been a great partner working with the US Embassy on the importance of air pollution and climate change and the reason why I think that this air quality monitor will be successful, is that Rwandans are already taking the necessary steps to decrease air pollution in many ways.

For instance, you can look at car free Sundays that we've seen throughout the country. You can also look at the increased usage of E-bikes and e-motorcycles. I believe there's a US company Ampersand that I saw a little while ago that they received a \$3.5 million capital investment. So, you see that Rwanda is walking the talk on how we can cut back on-air pollution.

Another data point to think about, as I saw, was in the Rwanda news about how there's this government push for having Rwandans use cleaner alternatives when it comes to cooking where you're not just necessarily relying on coal and wood or grass but you might be relying on gas or electric stoves. So, I believe that Rwandans are aware of the challenges that they face when it comes to air pollution and air quality. And so, when I look at what the United States can do, it's being a partner with Rwanda.

Through a Power Africa investment,

OffGridBox installed modular solar energy systems to power six off-grid healthcare facilities in Rwanda's Nyamagabe, Kayanza, Nyagatare, and Muhanga districts – the solution providing power and clean drinking water to Gasagara healthcare center was inaugurated on March 25, 2021.

We have great resources here at the US Embassy, for instance, let's look at our USAID colleagues, when you look at the Power Africa USA programme, thus far Power Africa has contributed to over 183 megawatts here in Rwanda, so ensuring that there's access to electricity. So, this receives this on grid off grid project. So, the importance of that is that Rwanda, United States are working together to find tangible solutions to the challenges that we face when it comes to climate.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to take our Chargé d'Affaires Deborah McLean out to Lake Kivu to see ContourGlobal, there are methane extractions barrage and you can just see the innovation that ContourGlobal and the government of Rwanda has and just extracting the methane that's already naturally in the lake, and using that to generate electricity. That's just one example.

The second aspect was, I also had the opportunity to take the Chargé d'Affaires to Trinity Metals, to one of their mining sites and she saw the proactive effort Trinity metals is doing to ensure that there's not any environmental degradation concern, and when they're doing the mining throughout the country.

So, you see that there's this conscious effort between the government of Rwanda, the United States and businesses here in the country to ensure that they're doing their due diligence to ensure that we're not destroying the environment worse than we need to, but also just taking that proactive step.

The other thing that I just recalled from the meeting we had at Lake Kivu with ContourGlobal, they mentioned that in order to burn off some of the excessive methane gas, they have a limit. They're limited in how much they can burn and that's a limit that's imposed by REMA. So, it shows that REMA is well aware of the challenges and the safety guards that we have to implement to ensure that we're not doing worse damage to the environment.

I believe that because Rwandans are just well informed and well educated on the issue, and are already taking proactive steps, this is going

to be just another complementary aspect to our relationship on the importance of air quality.

How far does the U.S Embassy's Air Quality monitor reach?

That's a great question. So, the system primarily focuses on the air quality in Kigali. So that's the max extent that it goes to. So, it's just focusing on the surrounding area of Kigali. It doesn't go out to the western province or the Eastern Province, just focused in Kigali city.

What about other parts of the country?

In my brief time here in Kigali, I've had the opportunity to go out to the Western Province, also go down to the southern province in Huye. And again, I just think you see the collective effort that everyday Rwandans are doing to ensure that they're trying to find cleaner alternatives when it comes to air pollution.

I do believe that there's just this awareness campaign. So, for instance, after the volcanic eruption that took place, there was a recent study done by REMA where there was poor air quality levels and REMA reassured the public that it wasn't due to necessarily the volcanic eruption and sulphur dioxide, but rather there was a human aspect, a human component to increasing levels of air pollution. And so, by just having that awareness of saying, okay, what are we doing to contribute to this problem? Now, how can we solve this issue and so that's where, again, you see Rwanda being a pioneer and an innovator on clean energy looking at cleaning cooking alternatives.

So, in my brief travels throughout the country, you can see that there is a proactive effort to ensure that everyone's doing their part. You're seeing a decrease in neighbours burning, you know, charcoal or wood in their backyard. And so, I do believe that there's this concerted effort that everyday everyone enjoys doing. And I believe that, again, that this is just an opportunity for the United States and Rwanda to partner and while this air quality monitor station is on top of the US Embassy, it benefits all of us who live here in Kigali and who live in Rwanda.

That can lead me to another question. How does it function?

It runs 24 hours a day. It stations on top of the embassy roof. It's able to withstand heavy rains so you can see it at all hours of the day. And again, so once you see the system, let's just say today's Thursday, tomorrow morning, you wake

up, you can see data from now, up until the moment that you're looking at the screen and you'll see historical trends.

So right now, if you were to go to <https://www.airnow.gov/>, you can type in Kigali and you would see what the current air quality is right now, in Kigali. Let's say you're interested in what was the air quality last week, so you can see historical trends.

You can see, again, another opportunity for partnership, you can see REMA discuss how, at certain hours of the day, air pollution is higher, that may be in the morning that may be in the evenings, and we have peak hours, due to more vehicles on the road, due to maybe individuals burning in their backyard. So, you can proactively look at the data and kind of make sense of, okay, when's a good time for me to walk and again, you'll see that it changes drastically throughout the day, even from morning to afternoon.

So, I believe that it's functioning well. The air quality monitor was installed back in February, we haven't had any issues since we've installed it. And again, I believe that this is just one of many other embassies that has implemented this air quality monitor programme. And just to be clear, the reason why the air quality monitor was installed in the first place, is to underscore the importance that the Biden administration, the US government has on air quality and the fight against climate change. And it was never to say, well, there's a problem in Rwanda. That's not it whatsoever. Rwanda is a champion of clean energy for climate change, and mitigating air pollution. And so, this is just a complementary effort to the efforts that are already being done here in Rwanda.

Let's say that I am in the village outside there, how can I access the data from the system?

Sure. That's a great question. So, it's publicly available. I understand that the government of Rwanda also has their air quality monitor systems, as well as the US air quality monitor. It's all about access to the internet, and it does not need to have a science background to understand the data to make sense of it.

So, for instance, we have a colour coordination system and you see, just by different colours, if it's green, we're in the

good. If you see the yellow, it's kind of okay, it's moderate, and you may have some issues. But then as we move to the orange: It is unhealthy for sensitive groups, and then we have unhealthy, very unhealthy and hazardous.

From what we've seen with the data, which also aligns with what REMA has produced at times, Rwanda, Kigali, to be specific, can fluctuate between moderate to unhealthy. And we can, you know, hypothesise that that may be due to increased construction and preparation for CHOGM, it may be with more truck deliveries coming in throughout the country. So, for us as a family, you know, when we look at that, okay? When it fluctuates between unhealthy and unhealthy for sensitive groups, then we may change our day, you know, I may not exercise outside, but rather I may stay inside, or I may not go for a walk.

One of the things that I find with that is that the weather is absolutely beautiful here year-round. So, I love to walk to and from work living over in Kacyiru. And it just allows me to meet new people and just explore the city. And when we find that, okay, today, the air quality may not be the best, then that's when I may drive to work. But on average, you relatively see that Rwanda is sort of in the yellow. It's a liveable condition for everyone. As far as just going back to the point of accessing, this data is publicly available on <https://www.airnow.gov/>, and anyone can access it, whether you're here in Rwanda, or if you're in a different country and we want to make sure that people have that ability to access that information.

In the past, the United States was not heard much in environment, or climate change politics. But this time around the country is stepping up its effort to combat the effects of climate change, while also supporting various initiatives in the same sector, both at home and on international level. Can you tell us why the US is now making such a move?

I believe it's twofold. First and foremost, the science is clear. The world is getting warmer, you see the effects of global warming, and you see the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. We have to do something. And the administration has made this a priority that we cannot stand idly. As someone who's a new father, we have to make sure that we're preparing the world for the next generation. And so, when you look at what the United States has done, and will do, it's all because of international cooperation. We see that the world is having a concerted effort to do something about climate change, to help

mitigate it. And so, there are things within our control as the United States as a government, but also in general as an international community. And that's what we're already doing. And so, when we look at the United States, rejoining the Paris Agreement, when we look at the United States being supporters of COP 26, and as we're preparing for COP 27 in Egypt, it just shows you that the world is going to move on and the United States is going to be a part of that conversation.

We believe in the importance of climate and science diplomacy. And we know that this is what's needed. As someone who covers agriculture here in Rwanda, we see the challenges that farmers are having when it comes to droughts, or when it comes to the irregular rain patterns. How do we adapt? How do we adjust to that? And so, it's through partnership with the ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, with REMA, how we can provide capacity building to our Rwandan counterparts, helping provide technical assistance. That's what we're doing and that's what we continue to do.

When we look at what our colleagues and USAID are doing here at the Embassy, they have large programmes that are reaching out to the villages, reaching out to rural farmers. I recently had the chance to take the Chargé d'Affaires to Cyizi primary school down in the southern province right near Huye. In that area. When we were there, we have a partnership with the World Food Programme under our US Department of Agriculture, McGovern dole school feeding programme and when we were there, we stopped at the World Food programme's field office in Huye and they were talking about how farmers are having the challenges of drying their crops because of the irregular rain patterns.

And you're seeing this increase in aflatoxin. And so, WFP, the World Food Programme, created these little aflatoxin cards where they can be put inside the storage facilities to see the levels of aflatoxin. And so, knowing that that's a challenge, we have our USAID colleagues who are working with these farmers to ensure that they have proper drying methods and that they have the institutional capacity to properly store their crops. And so that when it comes time for them to harvest or time to sell their produce, they're able to do that without this fear of an increase in aflatoxin.

So, I believe that when we look at what the

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



United States can do, and is already doing with Rwanda and the local people, we're already seeing the success of that.

So, I believe it's through continued partnership, through the US government programmes that we have here in Rwanda, through capacity building, it's also through technical assistance and one of the things that I find is that in my brief time here, everyone's open to having a conversation, whether it is REMA, whether it is MINAGRI, whether it's NAEB, National Agriculture export board, you see that everyone wants to have a conference, they want to be partners.

And that's why it's so critical for us as an embassy, for us as the United States government to ensure that we're doing our role in providing technical assistance, capacity building to everyone and colleagues. And it's an ongoing conversation. And that's the key part is, that it's not the United States lecturing, but how can we collaborate and partner on these critical issues that affect all of us?

As we approach the end of the Interview, is there a message that you have for Rwandans, as we approach the Celebration of the World Environment Day?

Sure. I would say my message to everyone is twofold. First and foremost, the United States is a partner. And we have a long-standing relationship that we hope to continue to strengthen through many engagements. Again, as I see my role in agriculture, energy, labour, youth, and mining, you see areas of cooperation. So that's just my portfolio. When we look at all the work that is being done as

a US Embassy in Rwanda, It's a partnership. And we need to continue this partnership, we see the support and technical assistance and capacity building that we're doing. And it's just the beginning. So first and foremost, the United States is your partner. And there's much more for us to do and work to be done. And it's just the beginning of what's to come.

Second, the importance of air quality. At the start of May, we had air quality Awareness Week. As I mentioned earlier, air quality affects all of us, air pollution is serious, and it has health effects, as well as it has economic consequences. So, we have to be aware and know that there are avenues to look at the data to show us how we can take proactive steps to ensure our health and our survivability here in Rwanda, throughout the world for other embassies that had these programmes. So, strong partnership as well as knowing the importance of air pollution and what we can do. The other aspect is, each of us has a part to play when it comes to mitigating air pollution, whether that's driving less, whether that's cooking with cleaner alternatives. It can be small, as I mentioned before I walk to work almost every day. That's my role in doing that. I don't drive a diesel truck, but it's a little thing like that. And so, I challenge everyone, Rwandans or Americans, anyone who's interested in air and air pollution and air quality, what can you do as an individual within your family unit, to do your part to help contribute to mitigating the negative effects of air quality and air pollution.

By: Ange de la Victoire DUSABEMUNGU



2019-2022: What are the feelings of citizens who were once devastated by Sebeya river flooding?

When you visit some parts of Rubavu District in the Western Province of Rwanda, residents assure you that they now feel safe due to the fact that they are no longer affected by the disasters mainly caused by the poor management of the Sebeya Catchment.

By Deus Ntakirutimana, TOP AFRICA NEWS reporter

testify that since the beginning of Sebeya Catchment Rehabilitation, they are safe both in the wellbeing and the economic aspects.

A large number of these residents believe that so far, their houses and their crops are no longer flooded due to tangible measures taken in the Sebeya Catchment Rehabilitation Project.

For instance, Residents of Rubavu District who used to be affected by the Sebeya flooding

Normally, the Sebeya Catchment in Western Rwanda has been facing a series



of compounding crises: Steep, mountainous terrain, deforestation, mining exploitation, unsustainable agricultural practises and some of the heaviest rainfall resulted in extreme soil erosion, siltation and turbidity and downstream flooding resulting in economic damage, loss of life and livelihoods. In 2019, the Rwandan Government with the financial support from the Dutch Embassy in Kigali launched the “Embedding Integrated Water Resource Management in Rwanda (EWMR)” Project to restore Sebeya Catchment. The catchment combines Rubavu, Nyabihu, Rutsiro and Ngororero Districts.

Later in the implementation process, the

Government attributed the restoration tasks to the Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) which has been receiving the technical support from the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI).

Taking the example of Rubavu District, it is well-known that Sebeya river has been repeatedly devastating properties and human lives in Nyundo, Kanama and Rugerero sectors specifically in cells such as Karambo, Nyamwiri, Nkomane and Rusongati where Sebeya flooding was the major cause of deaths during the period of Heavy rain.



One cow per family has brought happiness in the faces of the catchment residents among many other initiatives

The issue, which has been widely reported in the media on a daily basis [during the rainy season] has provoked the government and its donors to seek a solution between the years 2019-2022.

Relocation of residents from High risks zones, planting bamboo and reeds along the river Sebeya, afforestation and agroforestry programs were initiated, water retention walls were constructed, horizontal and vertical terraces are becoming a source of incomes among households, erosion control and livelihoods projects such as One cow per family have brought happiness in the faces of the catchment residents among many other initiatives.

For nearly two years, residents in those areas say they are now able to sleep without fearing that the erosion or flooding water could cause catastrophes. Ms. Donathille Mukarango, a mother of five , was one of the victims of the floods three years ago. At the time, her house was completely demolished by the outflow of Sebeya river.

She asserted that Sebeya Catchment restoration has been a solution to their lives that were at risk as well as to the properties that were being destroyed each time it was raining.

Ms. Mukarango testified that Sebeya flooding destroyed other houses, including those of her neighbors in Nyamwiri village in Kabirizi cell.

Ms. Nyirandabateze Goretti, another resident, says the impacts of the project on the river have calmed the flooding down, and now they have no similar panic like it was before the launch of the catchment restoration project.

On the part of the administration, the mayor of Rubavu district, Mr. Ildephonse Kambogo says that the restoration of Sebeya Catchment has been productive for the past two years.

“We used to have many cases where the Sebeya river was flooding into the houses of the people, some of which collapsed and their various belongings were damaged including human loss” Mr. Kambogo testified.

He said the other commendable fact is the terraces that had been built on the slopes which have now stopped the erosion and those terraces that have also increased the farming productivity.

The official said the project benefits will continue to be maintained, taking good care of bamboo and trees planted, erosion control and terraces will also be maintained, in addition to repairing water retention walls where needed.



Commenting on the impacts of the Sebeya Catchment Restoration projects, the former IUCN Country Representative and Current IUCN Regional Head of Land systems and IUCN Kenya Country Representative Mr. Charles Karangwa said “the project have significantly improved biophysical conditions of the catchment including reduction in soil erosion and floods.”

He added that “It has strengthened communities’ economic capacity to thrive and it has created thousands of jobs especially during the COVID 19 period.”

According to the official there is a need to scale up the Village land use action plans across all country’s catchments as an implementation tool to stop soil erosion and improve people’s livelihoods.

Through pro-active and participatory engagement with team from Rwanda Water Resources Board, and technical supports from IUCN, SNV, RWARRI and districts, the project yielded tangible benefits that include reduced impacts of flooding in the

catchment, landscapes restored, enhanced agricultural yields, and improved community livelihoods.

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Six ways Rwanda is building resilient and sustainable transport systems

Over the last decade, Rwanda has invested in building efficient and resilient transport systems. Guided by the country's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS), the Government of Rwanda has carried out numerous initiatives to promote sustainable mobility and the green economy at large.

Road transport accounts for 13% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Rwanda and this is expected to continue to rise. That is why developing efficient and resilient transport systems is one of 14 programmes of action under the GGCRS. This specific programme of action has four key components that include:

- Improving the efficiency of the internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles measured by reduction in emissions per kilometre
- Awareness of new technology
- Investments in infrastructure
- Developing efficient operational systems measured by reduction in emissions per km.

The 2018 Inventory of Air Pollution found high levels of air pollution across Kigali, mainly

due to the burning of biomass and traditional cooking methods in rural and peri-urban areas and vehicular emissions in urban centers. The study found that from 2012 and 2015, the number of hospital admissions for acute respiratory infections doubled to more than 3.3 million.

A major contributing factor to air pollution identified by the study was that 95.2% of cars in operation in Rwanda are currently more than ten years old with less stringent emissions standards than newer models. The Government of Rwanda is working to address the pollution levels and Global Green Growth Institute, (GGGI) support is vital to ensure that the country can achieve its goal of reducing air pollution.

The Global Green Growth Institute has been supporting the Government of Rwanda to achieve low-carbon development. Part of the GGGI work has been supporting the transition to green cities and sustainable urban development, introduction of non-motorized transport, introduction of car free zones and adoption of e-mobility as a key elements to ensuring that cities are more livable, less polluting, and contribute to improved public health outcomes.

Over the past years, GGGI has supported a



range of initiatives across the transport sector to emphasize green cities components of access to sustainable services through an emphasis on walking and cycling and recently in the area of e-mobility.

GGGI Rwanda completed assessments in secondary cities and conducted stakeholder consultations on sustainable mobility. The work of GGGI has led to the introduction of cycling and pedestrian lanes on the roads in Kigali and across the six secondary cities as well as the introduction of public bicycle sharing scheme in Kigali and Musanze, and plans to introduce it in Huye and Rubavu cities.

From 2019, GGGI Rwanda has made headway into e-mobility and GGGI is providing technical support and awareness creation support. GGGI Rwanda also worked on a collaborative project on non-motorized transport to contribute towards the pedestrianization of car-free zones in the City of Kigali and the prioritization of walking and cycling infrastructure in urban centres. The aim of all these interventions is to reduce vehicular emissions through several means to support a multi-modal transport system with an emphasis on low-carbon options for residents and commuters.

Here are six ways Rwanda is building resilient and efficient transport systems at both the national

and local levels.

1. Developing a national sustainable mobility policy

Rwanda is developing a national sustainable mobility policy to facilitate the transition to e-mobility as the country continues strives for low carbon economic growth. The policy will strengthen collaboration between the private sector and the Government of Rwanda, attract investment in electric mobility solutions, foster new transport innovations and enhance the usage of non-motorised transport as a part of a wider transit oriented development policy.

Rwanda's transport sector is highly dominated by internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles (mostly old vehicles imported from abroad), with each of the over 264 500 car registered in Rwanda powered by gasoline or diesel. The transport sector is rapidly growing, with an annual vehicle growth rate of about 12% according to Rwanda's Ministry of Infrastructure.

These fuel-powered vehicles are the biggest contributor to poor air quality along busy roads in Rwanda, according to a 2017 study on air pollution carried by REMA, Rwanda's environment watchdog.

Among key proposed actions is to transition to electric vehicles, with the country aiming to have 20% of all buses transition to electric by 2030 and introduction of incentives for the adoption of electric vehicles.

GGGI is supporting the transition to electric vehicles through supporting strategy and policy formulation, awareness creation and conducting assessments and research to support informed decision making. Specifically, GGGI Rwanda Sustainable Mobility Program supports the government of Rwanda to (i) provide strategic advice on the development of Rwanda's e-mobility transition, specifically in the adoption of electric vehicles (including electric buses), (ii) Support in the formulation of the Transport Policy, Transport Master Plan, and regulatory framework governing the adoption of e-mobility, (iii) Strengthening of non-motorised infrastructure prioritization and engagement of vulnerable groups and (iv) resource mobilization.

Investing in sustainable mobility is expected to reduce levels of pollution and emissions from the transport sector and improve the overall commute experience across the country.

2. Attracting e-mobility investments

Rwanda has seen an increase in major e-mobility investments thanks to the country's friendly doing business environment. For example, VW Mobility Solutions, Victoria Autofast Rwanda, Ampersand, Rwanda Electric Motorcycle Ltd and Safi/Gura Ride have all significantly invested in electric cars and motorbikes. Rwanda welcomes investments that support the transition to clean and green mobility.

3. Introducing e-mobility incentives

The estimated cost of transitioning to e-mobility and the adoption of electric vehicles in Rwanda is US \$900 million. However, transitioning to electric motorcycles alone would save the Rwandan economy Rwf 23 billion (US \$22 million) in fuel imports every year.

That's why the Government of Rwanda has introduced numerous fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to fast-track the electric mobility transition and attract additional investments in the growing industry. These incentives include:

- **Low Charging Costs:** Costs for charging stations will be priced at the lowest industrial tariff, which is significantly lower than the residential tariff. Electric vehicle owners will also benefit from reduced tariffs when charging during off

peak hours – from 11pm to 8am.

- **Tax Breaks:** Electric vehicles (including Battery- electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles), spare parts, batteries and charging station equipment are now exempted from import and excise duties, zero rated Value Added Tax and spare parts, batteries and other equipment will also be exempted from withholding tax. Ordinarily, vehicle imports have to settle a bill of 25 per cent import duty, 18 per cent VAT, five per cent to 15 per cent excise duty, depending on the size of the engine, five per cent withholding tax, plus other levies.
- **Provision of land:** Companies setting up charging stations across the country can now access government owned land on a rent-free basis.
- **Promoting Local Production:** Companies manufacturing and assembling electric vehicles in Rwanda can now enjoy a 15 percent Corporate Income Tax rate and tax holiday.

These incentives will make it easier for Rwandans to be part of the country's efforts to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Expanding and enhancing public transport networks

Rwanda has been working to improve public transport infrastructure. In 2012, the government approved the Public Transport Policy and Strategy and the Ministry of Infrastructure ensures the national road network is expanded, rehabilitated, upgraded, and maintained. The same direction was reiterated in the overall National Transport Policy and Strategy for Rwanda adopted by Cabinet in April 2021, where the infrastructure development aims to ensure public transport connects different areas of the country, thus contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The City of Kigali is also working to increase the number of bus stations in Kigali and upgrade existing infrastructure to build the capacity of the city's public transport network. A long-held plan to build a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that is expected to comprise of a 160 km road network around Kigali, that will be plied exclusively by buses with capacity of more than 100 passengers is also still on the table. In Addition, in May 2021, Rwanda entered a partnership with a

private investment company to jointly work on introducing aerial cable cars in Kigali.

5. Improving the quality of public transport systems

The Government of Rwanda, through the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority, recently introduced the Public Transport Generation 2. The new system aims to improve public transport by increasing the use of technology, improving route planning, fostering a better vehicle mix and introducing a scheduled service.

To improve public transport, buses in Kigali are equipped with free internet for passengers and make public transport more attractive to users, thus discouraging usage of private cars. The provision of the internet is part of the Smart Kigali Initiative launched in 2013 to provide free wireless connection in buses and taxis, airports, hotels and restaurants among other places.

Apart from expanding public transport facilities, the country also plans to introduce high quality, high frequency Dedicated Bus Lanes (DBL) for public transport in Kigali to further encourage the use of public transport instead of private cars.

In line with electrification of mobility, Rwanda aims to have 20% of all buses electric by 2030, which will result in an estimated reduction of 72,000 tCO₂eq.

According to Rwanda's Vision 2050, Rwanda will develop a modern and efficient transport system where median time taken to commute to work is 45 minutes by 2035 and 25 minutes by 2050. The percentage of population using public transportation will grow to reach 90% or more and convenient public transport will be accessible at least within 500metre radius or less from commuters' homes.

6. Partnering to achieve sustainable mobility

The Government of Rwanda is working with a range of partners to achieve sustainable mobility and an efficient and resilient transport system. Key partners are the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), UNEP, KfW, International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank (WB). These partners are working with the Ministry of Infrastructure and other government institutions on the following activities:

- **Background and feasibility study on introduction of electric vehicles in Rwanda:** In partnership with UNEP and KfW, a study

was conducted to assess the feasibility of introduction of electric vehicles in Rwanda. This study sheds light on benefits in terms of emissions reduction, impacts on energy consumption, and other cross cutting issues associated with the new technology namely job creation, poverty reduction and gender dimensions.

- **E-mobility Showcase:** In collaboration with Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Infrastructure, GGGI hosted an e-mobility showcase on current and emerging technologies in Rwanda and connected companies with potential investors in the region and internationally.
- **Electric Buses:** GGGI has been providing support to the Government of Rwanda to prepare a conducive environment and bridging the knowledge gap for the uptake of electric buses—first within the City of Kigali, and eventually to other urban centers in the country. The team has supported by promoting investment, helping to produce an Electric Bus Charging Infrastructure Report and training government staff on e-Bus System Planning and Optimisation.
- **Electric Buses:** IFC has initiated a study to assess the feasibility of e-buses in Kigali and inform the Government of Rwanda on potential PPP model for deploying e-buses in Kigali for start up and with a possibility to replicate a model for larger scale deployment in the rest of Rwanda. This work is to be complemented by concurrent work conducted by IFC to develop a diagnostic framework to prioritize and evaluate selected Sub-Saharan African cities' potential for adoption of e-mobility solutions.

Through a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) has also joined the effort to promote electric vehicles, including the following initiatives:

Plug-In Hybrid Vehicle: REMA recently launched its first ever plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) that will support the institution to fulfill its mandate of environmental protection and showcase that electric vehicle usage is possible in Rwanda.

Converting ICE motorbikes to e-bikes: The United Nations Development Programme is also supporting REMA to retrofit 80 internal

combustion engine motorbikes to electric motorbikes through a local company, Rwanda Electric Mobility. The initiative will support efforts to phase out polluting internal combustion engine motorcycles, particularly the motorcycle taxi fleet, which accounts for more than 80% of motorcycles in Rwanda. At least 40% of motorcycles, especially moto-taxis, will be eligible for the programme. Rwanda Electric Mobility aims to retrofit up to 30,000 motorcycles over the next five years.



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#AskProfAgnes: Health Experts define Climate Change impacts on Health

By Ange de la Victoire DUSABEMUNGU

While different countries continue to look at the effects of climate change in the mirror of Environment, health experts have shown that climate change continues to be at the forefront of contributing to deaths from various diseases and climate-related epidemics.

This was noted on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 in a talk entitled ASK PROF AGNES BINAGWAHO during which various health experts and climate change experts shared their thoughts on the current Health Challenges vis a vis the Climate Change impacts.

Opening the conversation, Prof. Agnes Binagwaho, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Global Health Equity Rwanda said that "Climate change affects everyone without regard to their race, gender, or nationality, so as global citizens this should concern us all and it is important that the health sector takes lead in responding."

She added that "Of course, the vulnerable are more affected than the wealthy. So as global citizens this should concern each and every one of us."

According to the World Health Organization, between 2030 and 2050, Climate change is expected to be the cause of 250,000 additional

deaths per year, including 95,000 deaths from childhood malnutrition, 60,000, from malaria 48,000 from Diarrhoea and 28,000 from climate threats in elderly People.

Prof. Binagwaho noted that "The financial expense for damage is also estimated to be very costly between more than 2 billion and 4 billion by the year 2020. And of course, the poor country will pay the cost more, even if they contribute less to the problem."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had concluded that to prevent millions of climate change related deaths, the global temperature of the world had to be limited to 1.5.

"However, in 2019, the report indicates that most likely, the world is going to exceed that and it was estimated that we may reach 3.2 degrees by 2,100." Prof. Binagwaho explains.

She added that in 2021, the Climate Change report proved this point, and was quite devastating for many parts of the world, with many disasters occurring in Europe, in Asia, in Africa... "With an amplitude not seen before." Noted Prof. Binagwaho

She continued saying that "The impact of climate change has been enormous. For instance, on the African continent, we had

195% more Africans affected by extreme weather. Even if we compare that to the year before.”

“So, another example is the increase of hurricanes. We have seen in Africa, what happened in Mozambique, up to Malawi and recently in South Africa, and the other continent is the same. It is important to note that the increase in temperature is highly due to an increase of greenhouse emission that are largely contributed by the G 20 countries that emit more than 80% of all greenhouse emission compared to continents like ours in Africa that emit only less than 5% but still face global warming effects.” She said

“And the correction to that it’s hard to our continent to slow down our development just because the rich country has misbehaved knowingly for years and are still doing it.... So, when discussing climate change, it is important also to consider the inequities, the social determinants of health because socio economic inequities exposed more vulnerable to threats.” Prof. Binagwaho added.

With reference to WHO, Prof. Binagwaho reminded us that Health crisis is expected to undo the 50 years progress that we have made.

Speaking at the conversation, Dr. Tarun Weeramanthri, President of Public Health Association of Australia, revealed that in 2019, and 2020, he conducted a yearlong inquiry into the impact of climate change on health in Western Australia for the state government.

He said that the findings showed that the health impacts are real, and the public are convinced as they have lived through it all.

Dr. Tarun said “The increased risk of these extreme weather events is climate change related” while at the same time causing the physical and mental health effects, direct and indirect.

“There is no doubt that such COVID 19 has drawn attention away from climate action in the short term. But though there was a temporary reduction in emissions in 2020, that has now reversed and the trend line upwards has resumed.” He said.

“We’ve also seen the response divide in countries, particularly on the basis of



Prof. Agnes Binagwaho, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Global Health

income, privilege and development, but also open up divides within countries on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.” Dr. Tarun added.

According to Mr. Ramon San Pascal, Executive Director of Health Care without Harm, “Despite the economic growth in our region in Southeast Asia, there is still this issue of reaching the unreached people and communities still afflicted by infectious diseases and higher rates of maternal and infant mortality. Now, even during the time of the pandemic, the impact of adverse and extreme climate events has continued to devastate vulnerable population and so doing it also the Climate change also disrupt the delivery of healthcare services thus, there is a need to improve the resilience of healthcare facilities such that it will enable hospitals and health systems to continue to provide essential services even during calamities such as strong typhoons and other climate driven disasters.”

On the other hand, Mr. Ramon added that “we also acknowledge that hospitals, healthcare facilities, the sector itself contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions in a big way to energy consumption, transportation, products that are manufactured, utilization and disposal are what we would later on call as the healthcare waste.”

He explained that “In the time of the pandemic, one huge environmental impact created and brought another crisis is the sudden surge of COVID related waste.”

“This is not only in Southeast Asia, but much more because even before the pandemic Southeast Asia is already considered as among the top countries that contribute to global plastic pollution and hospitals are also part of it,”

As explained by Michael Jenkins, Founder and CEO of Forest Trends Association that works on



Speaking at the conversation, Dr. Tarun Weeramanthri, President of Public Health Association of Australia, revealed that in 2019, and 2020, he conducted a yearlong inquiry into the impact of climate change on health in Western Australia for the state government.

nature-based solutions to combat climate “As we have seen again and again, recently this last week, and in the devastation in Durban in South Africa, water is at the intersection of climate change and health. Climate change is water. Too much too little. Water is essential. For health, we know the access to clean water is critical for avoiding waterborne diseases. We know access to water is critical for sanitation and hygiene. We know water is critical for food production, access to adequate food and nutrition as a basis for health.”

Speaking on the preparedness of the health system to the threats caused by climate change and how Rwanda is tackling this issue, Dr. Corneille Ntihabose, Head of Clinical and Public Health Services Department in Rwanda’s Ministry of Health, firstly explained that according to UN Climate Change report 2020, Africa is facing increasing temperatures and sea levels.

“We are seeing some changes in precipitation patterns and also more extreme weather threatening human health and safety.” He said, adding that “It is estimated that between 2013 and 2050 additional 250,000 deaths will occur each year because climate change is having an impact on Health.”

Dr. Ntihabose explained that “The climate change, we know that can reverse, slow down and undermine the Health performance we have achieved if no concrete adaptation

measures are made.”

He said that “in Rwanda we have achieved a lot in maternal mortality reduction, child mortality reduction, improving the fertility, improving also the data on family planning, the coverage of community based health insurances, service utilization, but if we do nothing to reverse this climate change impacts, the climate change will continue to have impacts on those achievement or those performance”

Therefore, he adds, “we must do everything because this is primarily for nearly all morbidity and mortality causes in Rwanda.

“Some best practices we can share, we started with the policies which will be adopted in 2019. The policy on Environment and Climate Change has some strategic directions where the government is positioning itself in environment and climate change, what actions can be done and this policy is accompanied by strategic plan, which underline the activities you can conduct by increasing awareness and some interventions that can be done on the ground in order to curb the impacts of climate change on many sectors including ours in health.” He said.



Five ways Rwanda is investing

Rwanda is located in the Albertine Rift, a region considered especially rich in biodiversity, making it ideal for conservation and ecotourism. From the protection of national parks to advancing responsible tourism, the country has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting biodiversity conservation, payment for ecosystem services, and sustainable travel.

This commitment was formalised through Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy, which includes 'Ecotourism, Conservation and Payment of Ecosystem Services' as one of 14 programmes of action.

Here are five ways Rwanda is promoting ecotourism and conserving its natural heritage.

1. Creation of Gishwati-Mukura National Park and designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

In 2016, Gishwati-Mukura was established as a legally protected area and the country's fourth national park after Nyungwe, Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks. Four years later, the landscape was named among the World Network of Biosphere Reserves by

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The rehabilitation of the Gishwati-Mukura landscape and the creation of the national park was made possible by the Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC) Project implemented by Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) with the support of the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank, and the Forest of Hope Association.

This achievement has led to the sustainable conservation and management of Gishwati-Mukura National Park, new opportunities for community empowerment, education and research for sustainable development as well as for eco- and community tourism.

The Gishwati Forest Reserve is a secondary montane rainforest fragment located just south of Volcanoes National Park in western Rwanda. It is part of the Congo-Nile Divide forest complex that includes Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda and the contiguous Kibira National Park in Burundi. The Park is made up of two separate forests – the larger Gishwati and small Mukura, forming a total of 34 square kilometres plus a buffer zone, according to the Rwanda Development Board (RDB).



in ecotourism and conservation

2. Mountain gorilla conservation and re-introduction of threatened and endangered species

The Government of Rwanda, through the Rwanda Development Board and in collaboration with conservation partners, has achieved success in protecting and increasing the endangered mountain gorilla population and conserving its habitat.

Thanks to community led conservation efforts, the mountain gorilla population in the Virunga Massif has increased from 480 in 2010 to 604 as of June 2016. Today, mountain gorillas are the only great ape species increasing in number in the world and the species was recently down-listed from critically endangered to endangered on the IUCN Red List.

Rwanda is also planning to invest \$255 million (approx. 260bn Frw) in an ambitious plan to expand the volcanoes national park by approximately 23 percent, increasing its size by 37.4 square kilometres (or 3,740 hectares).

In 2015, the Government of Rwanda teamed up with African Parks to reintroduce lions to Akagera National Park after two decades of local extinction. This conservation milestone was followed by the reintroduction of 18

critically endangered Eastern black rhinos in 2017, further advancing the restoration of the park's biodiversity. In 2019, five additional rhinos from European zoos were translocated to Rwanda to increase the genetic diversity of the country's rhino population.

As a result of these efforts, the populations of these endangered animal species have increased, playing a crucial role in saving them from extinction. Since 2015, the lion population has more than quadrupled to reach 35 lions in 2020 and it keeps growing while large mammal numbers increased from 4,000 to over 13,500 since 2010, according to African Parks, the organization that manages the park.

3. Investments in ecotourism

Rwanda's tourism sector is the country's leading foreign exchange earner. In 2019, the sector earned US \$498 million. Within the industry, Ecotourism is quickly becoming dominant, thanks to the demand from travellers seeking low-impact experiences.

Rwanda has positioned itself as a high-yield, low volume destination in keeping with its conservation-centric approach to tourism. This strategy has attracted

several high-end lodges and professional management such as international brands including Singita, One&Only, Wilderness Safaris and Mantis Collection and local brands such as The Retreat, Amakoro Songa Africa, Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge and The Bishop's House.

These and other hospitality brands have made a valuable addition to the tourism offering, providing a diverse range of world class accommodation and experiences and contributing to conservation efforts – especially reforestation. As a result, Rwanda has been recognised by leading international travel publications as one of the top global destinations for luxury ecotourism.

Rwanda has also invested in the creation of eco-tourism parks to spur growth of the sector. The latest is the Nyandungu Urban Eco-Tourism Park, a 121.7 hectares wetland park located right in the heart of its capital Kigali. The ecotourism-park boosts ornamental ponds, gallery forests, medicinal plant gardens, paved walk ways and cycle lanes, restaurants, information centre, recreational and other biodiversity services. Since 2016, Rwanda invested about 6.3 billion Rwandan francs to restore and create the Nyandungu Park, according to the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA). This investment could generate up to 1 billion Rwandan francs in revenue for the government during the first decade of operation of the site. The restoration of Nyandungu wetland into a Wetland Eco-park will also improve the ecological functioning, aesthetics and recreational potential of the wetland.

Through its partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Rwanda Environment Management Authority, GGGI provided technical support throughout the restoration of



Nyandungu urban wetland, starting with the development of the eco-park master plan, design and Bill of Quantities review and technical validation workshops. This technical support was part of GGGI's work to strengthen climate resilience in the City of Kigali. Thanks to the GGGI support and the collaborative efforts with all the stakeholders involved in the project, Nyandungu Wetland Eco-Park was designed, developed and constructed with green infrastructure and services strategies for green energy, saving and recycling water, use of local and natural materials as well as architectural designs that maximize natural lighting and ventilation.

Rwanda's conservation efforts would not have been a success without the power of partnerships. The Government of Rwanda works hand-in-hand with several partners to support the promotion of biodiversity conservation, and enable Rwanda to invest in nature and communities.

4. Protection of national parks

The protection of national parks and payment of ecosystems count among significant conservation achievements in Rwanda. This has been achieved through the expansion of the Akagera National Park buffer zone, the long term protection of Nyungwe and Akagera national parks through a unique partnership with African Parks, and the rehabilitation and establishment of Gishwati-Mukura National Park.

Investments were also made in law enforcement activities in and around national parks as well as community engagement and education interventions. Raising awareness about the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the steps for its sustainable use and conservation play an important in the country's efforts to protect biodiversity, mostly across its five parks.

The Government of Rwanda also recently announced plans to expand Volcanoes National Park due to its growing mountain gorilla population and vision for community livelihood improvement. This once in a generation initiative will expand the park by approximately 23%, increasing its size by 37.4 square kilometres (3,740 hectares). According to RDB, this \$255 million expansion is expected to enhance the effective habitat functioning of the park, increase



To ensure the best use of community benefit funds, Rwanda promotes close ownership, participation and technical support from local communities

gorilla habitat and reduce human-wildlife conflict by 80 percent.

To ensure the best use of community benefit funds, Rwanda promotes close ownership, participation and technical support from local communities. Promising projects include payment for ecosystem services schemes with tea factories compensating forest-adjacent communities for water filtration services provided by protected areas and promoting the rehabilitation of degraded areas such as Gishwati and Mukura forests.

In addition, 10% of park tourism revenue is invested in the communities surrounding Rwanda's national parks, which fosters ownership and builds a constituency for conservation. Between 2005, over FRW 6.5 billion was distributed by Rwanda Development Board (RDB) to 780 community-based projects as part of this tourism revenue share scheme. Investment through this scheme target projects in the sectors of agriculture, infrastructure, and education, which directly benefit communities around the parks. Rwanda has also established a fund to compensate for any damage caused by wildlife, which is financed by 5% of tourism revenue.

Rwanda's conservation efforts aim to maintain and expand the country's protected areas as key economic assets supporting climate-resilience, and acting as havens for biodiversity and sources of vital ecosystem services.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) occurs when a beneficiary or user of an ecosystem service makes a direct or indirect payment to the provider of that service. The idea is that whoever preserves or maintains an ecosystem service should get an incentive for doing so. To promote this model of environmental conservation, Rwanda has partnered with Costa Rica and is developing a scalable PES system.

Rwanda has also developed Natural Capital Accounts for land, water, minerals and ecosystems (key natural resource pillars of economic development and sustainable growth). Natural Capital Accounts (NCA) are an important resource for tracking progress on socioeconomic, environment, and natural resource indicators. The NCA approach helps to integrate natural resources into economic analysis and can provide a broader picture of development progress by providing consistent, reliable data to support economic assessments and sound policy formation.

The country has also set a target to allocate 37.7% of land to conservation in its National Land Use and Development Master Plan. This demonstrates the Government of Rwanda's commitment to environment protection, natural resource management and climate change preparedness.

Learn more at www.rdb.rw and www.visitrwanda.com.

Utilising Payment for Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital Accounts

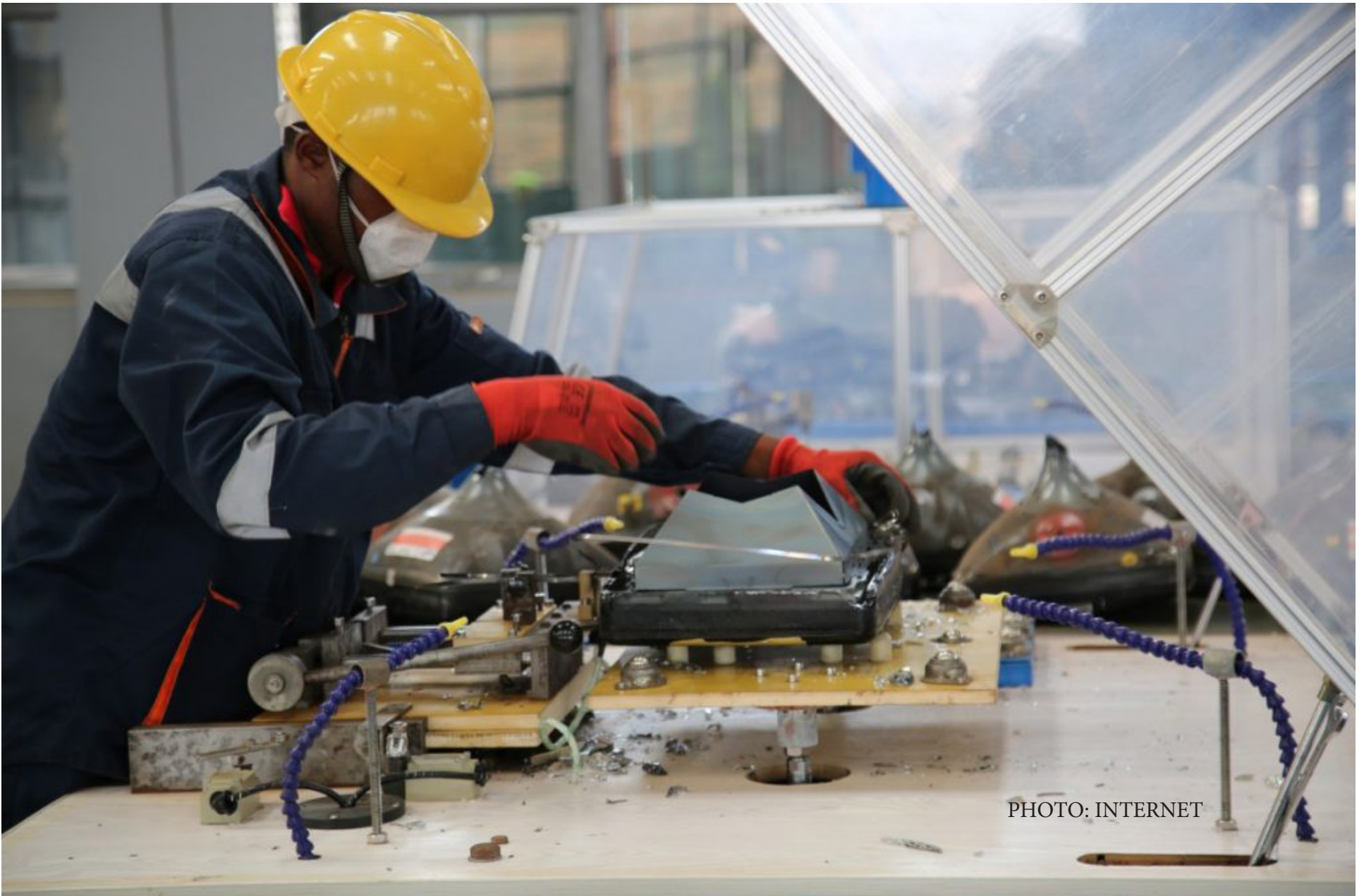


PHOTO: INTERNET

Rwanda Launches Campaign to Boost E-Waste Collection and Recycling

The Ministry of ICT and Innovation, the Ministry of Environment, and the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA), together with partners and affiliated agencies have launched a campaign to raise awareness about proper e-waste management and encourage Rwandans to recycle their e-waste. The campaign, which is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Telecommunication Union, will encourage the return of old and end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment, also known as e-waste, to dedicated collection points across the country.

Improper disposal of e-waste poses numerous threats to the environment, the economy, and people's health. Over the past five years, the Government of Rwanda and partners have made significant progress towards proper e-waste management to promote green growth and a circular economy.

The new campaign will increase awareness about how and where to drop off old electrical and electronic equipment and the

status of e-waste collection and management in Rwanda. The campaign aims to increase the collection rate of e-waste at dedicated collection points operated by Enviroserve Rwanda, an e-waste dismantling and recycling company that works in partnership with the Government of Rwanda.

This will result in the protection of human health and our environment.

“With the growing use of technology, electronic devices specifically, e-waste has become both a challenge and opportunity if well managed to reduce carbon emissions and hazardous effects on the environment. Statistics reveal that only 20% of global e-waste is formally recycled, which means the rest is disposed of inappropriately. This campaign seeks to sensitise citizens about the various e-waste management strategies that can be deployed to minimise negative impact on the environment while creating economic opportunities. Rwanda seeks to create a sustainable industry that generates less waste and creates new decent jobs. We need to be mindful of the impact of e-waste on future generations while taking advantage of the opportunities brought about by the circular economy and digital transformation and transform this problem into an economic opportunity,” said

Paula Ingabire, Minister of ICT and Innovation. “Rwanda has a bold vision to become a carbon-



neutral and climate resilient nation by 2050. To achieve this, environmental protection must be a priority. By properly disposing of e-waste, we'll reduce the amount of e-waste that goes to landfill. This will support the conservation of natural resource, the creation of green jobs, and the reduction of risks from hazardous materials affecting the health of Rwandans and our environment," said Dr. Jeanne D'Arc Mujawamariya, Minister of Environment.

"Rwanda has demonstrated a strong will to advance proper e-waste handling and create a regulatory framework that governs e-waste management and prevents hazardous chemical substances from polluting our environment and impacting people's health. We are delighted to launch this campaign together with our partners including UNEP and ITU and we are confident that it will be a success and bring about practical change in behaviour and understanding," said Eng. Deo Muvunyi, Acting Director General, Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority.

Through the campaign, the general public will be encouraged to drop off their e-waste and encourage their friends and family to do the same. The campaign will run until the end of June 2022 and will target residents of the City of Kigali and Musanze District.

The campaign comes as a reminder that everyone needs to take action to protect

our planet and contribute to the country's sustainable development and green growth. Partners The Rwanda e-waste campaign has been organised in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Telecommunication Union, the Ministry of ICT and Innovation, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, the Rwanda Information Society Authority, the Rwanda Green Fund, the Global Green Growth Institute, and Enviroserve Rwanda.

Nyandungu Eco-Park Opens to the Public



From a degraded wetland to an educational and recreational eco-park in the heart of Rwanda’s capital city, Nyandungu is now open to the public.

The restoration of the Nyandungu wetland and creation of an eco-tourism park saw the planting of 17,000 trees made up of 55 indigenous species. The 121 hectare park features a medicinal garden, a Pope’s Garden, five catchment ponds, three recreation ponds, an information centre, a restaurant as well as 10km of walkways and bike lanes.

The park will open on 8 July 2022 from 6am to 6pm, seven days a week. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority and the Rwanda Development Board and have signed an agreement with QA Venue Solutions to open and manage Nyandungu Eco-Park. The opening of Nyandungu Eco-Park represents the single largest addition to public green space in Kigali in the city’s history.

Speaking about the park, Juliet Kabera, Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, said the Nyandungu wetland represents the value of restoring urban ecosystems, and will serve as a blueprint for other wetlands in Kigali and across the country.

“Urban wetlands play a critical role in preventing flooding, addressing pollution and are home to unique biodiversity. As we face the impacts of climate change, wetlands will be a key ally to protect lives and livelihoods. We look forward to working with our partners to replicate the success of restoring Nyandungu in other urban wetlands in Kigali and across the country,” she said.

The Nyandungu Eco-Park provides a space for residents and visitors to the city to explore and learn from nature, and is part of Rwanda’s efforts to harness eco-tourism to restore biodiversity and

conserve urban wetland ecosystems.

The restoration of the wetland and creation of an eco-tourism park was funded by the Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) with support from the UK Government, the Italian Government through the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the UN Environment Programme. The six-year initiative has restored the Nyandungu wetland ecosystem and promoted the sustainable management of natural resources. The initiative has also created approximately 4,000 green jobs.

The rapid growth of Kigali and the associated human activities have put significant pressure on the wetlands. Wetlands, including Nyandungu, have been degraded and this led to biodiversity loss. Encroachment has also resulted in downstream flooding as well as increased pollution due sewage outflows.

In 2016, the Government of Rwanda through the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) developed the Nyandungu restoration project to respond to these challenges and demonstrate the potential of wetlands to abate pollution and reduce the risk of flooding in urban areas.

Since then, the Rwf 4.5 billion project has restored critical habitats, including a native fig forest and the wetland itself, and rehabilitated streams and ponds to alleviate floods and reed-beds to reduce pollution.

The wetland now also features a 10km network of walking and cycling paths, viewing areas, picnic areas, an information centre, and a restaurant among other facilities. “The restoration of Nyandungu wetland to an eco-tourism park serves as an example of Rwanda’s efforts and commitment towards environmental protection, particularly for the conservation of wetland ecosystems as well as eco-tourism. We look forward to welcoming domestic and international tourists to create fond memories in this

new biodiversity hotspot in Kigali,” said Zephania Niyonkuru, Deputy CEO of the Rwanda Development Board.

“Investing in nature is the best investment we can make. By protecting and restoring our ecosystems, we create jobs, improve people’s well-being and build community resilience to climate change and extreme weather events. The Fund is grateful for the support provided by our partners in the rehabilitation of the Nyandungu wetland, and we look forward to the many environmental and health benefits it will bring for generations to come,” said Teddy Mugabo, CEO of the Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA).

The Nyandungu Eco-Park is the first public recreational and touristic facility of its kind in Kigali. The park will be managed by QA Venue Solutions through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Rwanda. QA Venue Solutions, which also operates BK Arena, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the park and offer guided tours to visitors and its attractions.

“QA Venue Solutions is excited to take on the opportunity of managing Nyandungu Eco-Park in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, and believes in the agenda of protecting and restoring the wetlands. Our aim through this partnership is to work side by side with the government to achieve the objectives set out for the Nyandungu wetland, while preserving the space and allowing for the community to benefit from it through educational and recreational activities,” said Kyle Schofield, Managing Director, QA Venue Solutions.

The park will be open from 8 July 2022 and will welcome visitors seven days a week from 6am-6pm. Follow QA Venue Solutions on social media for more information on visiting the park.

Key Facts about Nyandungu Wetland

121.7 hectares in size, including 70 hectares of wetland and 50 hectares of forest.

Home to more than 62 local plant species.

Home to more than 100 bird species



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