



Press Release

August 16, 2019

Japan assists nutrition improvement in Rwanda through agriculture transformation

On August 16, 2019, the governments of Japan and Rwanda agreed on Japan's yen loan of 10 billion yen (approximately USD 91 million) to assist Rwanda's effort to tackle malnutrition in Rwanda through Japan's Sector Policy Loan for Nutrition Improvement through Agricultural Transformation. This is Japan's first Sector Policy Loan to the Government of Rwanda.

This morning, H.E. Mr. Takayuki MIYASHITA, Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda, and Hon. Dr. Uzziel NDAGIJIMANA, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning of the Republic of Rwanda signed the Exchange of Notes (E/N) for the yen loan program at the MINECOFFIN office. Mr. Shin MARUO, Chief Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Rwanda office, also signed the Loan Agreement (L/A) with Minister Ndagijimana.

Since 2012, Rwanda has seen decline of stunting among children of age between 6 months and 5 years from 42% to 35% in 2018¹, this is only a 7%-point reduction in 6 years, far short of Rwanda's target to reduce stunting below 19% by Rwanda fiscal year 2023/2024². Despite substantial growth in agricultural production over the past 10 years, food security and nutrition remain concerns, especially when looking at the vulnerability to shocks at the household level. The Food Consumption Score is 76% by 2018, but a large share of the population remains dependent on rain-fed agriculture and home-consumption. Primarily, agriculture plays the role of availing food through ensuring that production meets the diverse dietary needs of the population. Despite the growth in production over the past 10 years, staple food production remains below the targeted demand for domestic consumption and is substituted by importation.

The program will be executed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP), the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) and the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) under the supervision of MINECOFIN. The program will focus mainly on two components of Food Security and Multi-Sectoral Coordination.

In regards to agriculture transformation related activities, the program will help MINAGRI to set up nutrition sensitive agriculture guidelines, strengthen the availability of protein rich food through the small livestock distribution program under RAB. Additionally, it will leverage on achievement of Smallholder Market oriented Agriculture Project (SMAP), a JICA Technical Cooperation Project to build the capacity of targeted beneficiaries in terms of nutrition aspects.

^{1,3} NISR, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA), (2018)

² 7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017 – 2024 P37

At a more decentralized level, the program will fill a food nutrient gap in each district and suitable nutritious crop will be identified and promoted for production. Other components includes, making crop calendar for irrigation schemes, nutrition public awareness campaigns. Since malnutrition is a multi-sectoral issue that involves various stakeholders, the program will support the coordination at national level with the NECDP to the grass root level with the community health workers and farmer promoters' coordination.

The program is scheduled to run from 2019 to 2021, with the expectation to have big impact in eradicating the undernutrition and fighting against the stunting.

Basic information on the Project

Project Title	Sector Policy Loan for Nutrition Improvement through Agriculture Transformation
Executing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources Production (MINAGRI), National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP), Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), and Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC)
Specific Project Details	1) It will start from 2019 and end in 2021 2) It has a value of 10 billion Japanese Yen

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