



RWANDA ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Your Quarterly Newsletter

January - March 2023



Rwanda elected to chair Platform of Environmental Protection Agencies in Africa

We are pleased to share with you REMA quarterly newsletter which features key stories and photos of our work these past months. We hope you will find it interesting and informative.

Follow us on social media for regular updates and contact the team at communications@rema.gov.rw for any enquiries.



Rwandan Delegates conducted a strategic tour in UK to pave the way for the ACES's operationalisation



Rwandans urged to halt wetlands degradation and contribute to wetlands restoration



IMF Managing Director commended Rwanda's commitment to fighting climate change

Rwanda elected to chair Platform of Environmental Protection Agencies in Africa



Heads of African Environmental Protection Agencies in a group photo after electing Rwanda to chair Platform for Environmental Protection Agencies in Africa

The first-ever roundtable meeting of Heads of Environmental Protection Agencies and Directors of Environment in Africa (EPAs) has elected Rwanda to chair the Platform for EPAs in Africa.

The two-day meeting, held in Kigali from 7-8 March 2023, was organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Africa, in collaboration with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA).

Rwanda was elected chair of the Platform, Gabon as vice chair, Zambia as rapporteur, and Niger as a member of the bureau. Participants at the roundtable also adopted the blueprint for EPA Platform structure, mechanisms and operational modalities.

The inaugural roundtable discussions on the need for the Platform of Environmental Protection Agencies, organised by the Africa Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), was held virtually on 27 May 2022.

The roundtable provided an opportunity for the heads of EPAs, commissioners, and directors of environment departments to discuss a mechanism for cooperation.

The roundtable agreed to establish a platform where EPAs can discuss technical matters and strengthen their technical collaboration with UNEP. It was further agreed that a physical meeting should be held to develop a blueprint and formally endorse and launch the platform.

This decision was endorsed by the resumed eighteenth ordinary session of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Decision 18/1 which called for the establishment of a forum that brings together heads of environment protection agencies in Africa.

“We are glad that the EPA roundtable has been a success. The resolutions taken at the meeting will

help us to work together to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. We extend our gratitude to all the participants and the UNEP Africa Office for organising the meeting and making it a success,” said Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority.

The forum aims to share experiences, knowledge exchange and best practices, enhance science to policy interface, mobilise partnerships, and address technical and operational challenges. In addition, the decision urges Member States to support environmental protection agencies in implementing decisions and resolutions adopted at regional and global levels.



Despite the existence of Environmental Protection Agencies in all African countries, there has not been any formal platform to facilitate their collaboration, including in the form of sharing country-to-country environmental sustainability experiences, knowledge exchange, environmental best practices and implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The lack of collaboration has resulted in missed opportunities for EPAs to participate in the regional and global environmental discourse and benefit from the sharing of good practices in ad-

ressing common and continental environmental challenges.

About African Environmental Protection Agencies Platform

The Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held in September 2022 in Dakar, Senegal, called for the establishment of a platform of heads of EPAs in Africa. The inaugural roundtable discussions on the need for the Platform of Environmental Protection Agencies – organised by the Africa Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – were held virtually on

27 May 2022. Heads of EPAs from across Africa agreed to strengthen collaboration and seize opportunities to address common challenges.

The Roundtable provided an opportunity for the heads of EPAs, commissioners, and directors of environment departments to discuss establishing a mechanism for cooperation with UNEP and amongst themselves on various technical matters. The roundtable agreed to establish a platform where EPAs can discuss technical matters and strengthen their technical collaboration with UNEP.

Delegates from Rwanda conducted a strategic tour in UK to pave the way towards the operationalisation of ACES



Rwandan delegate visited the University of Birmingham and Birmingham Energy Institute among many other potential sites

Rwandan delegates and the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold-Chain (ACES) Project team are participating in a high-level strategic tour in the United Kingdom with the lead funder and experts towards the operationalization of the ACES, hosted in Rwanda to benefit the African Continent.

The four-day tour (from 26th February to 1st March 2023) presents an opportunity to Rwandan delegates to engage with senior government officials, academics, and partner organizations to strategically guide investments in the ACES and its Spe-

cialized Outreach and Knowledge Establishment (SPOKE) in Rwanda and throughout Africa.

The ACES will help get farmers' produce to market quickly and efficiently, thus reducing food waste, boosting profits and creating jobs as well as look to improve cold-chains for vaccines and health.

The delegates will visit and tour the University of Birmingham, the National Institute for Health and Care Research /Wellcome Clinical Research Facility, Birmingham Energy Institute, as well as the National

Robotarium, hosted at Heriot-Watt University.

The delegates include Juliet Kabera, Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), Prof. Claude Mambo MUVUNYI, Director General of the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), Claude Bizimana, Chief Executive Officer of NAEB, Dr. Sylvie Mucyo, Vice

Chancellor of Rwanda Polytechnic and Dr. Alice Ikuzwe, Deputy Principal of IPRC – Kigali

The tour will be an opportunity to underpin the foundational Government to Government and Academia to Academia relationships; explore and pursue priority academic collaboration, student exchanges, and joint research areas; open up new opportunities

with industry and other partners; help underpin major grant funding bids (i.e. for a new Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) Vaccine Manufacturing and Logistics Research Hub); review and finalize critical plans for the opening and scale-up of ACES Headquarter and the first SPOKES; and fast-track investments and operations of ACES to reach intended impacts in communities.

Rwandans urged to halt wetlands degradation and contribute to wetlands restoration



Nyandungu was once a highly degraded wetland before it was restored and turned into an Eco Park

Rwanda has on February 2, 2023 joined the rest of the world to commemorate the World Wetlands Day (WWD) usually celebrated every year with the ultimate aim to raise public awareness about the critical value and the benefits of wetlands ecosystems.

Wetlands are being lost three times faster than forests and Human activities are driving degradation. On account of this, Ramsar Convention selected the theme for this year's WWD celebrations as "It's Time for Wetland Restoration". "Igihe Kirageze, Dushiranye Ibishanga Byangiritse".

The theme is an urgent call for humanity to restore degraded

wetlands and ensure that they are conserved, sustainably used in order to achieve our global targets for climate, biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals. Actually, we have only seven years left before the end of the UN decade of ecosystem restoration, considered amongst the key objectives of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Therefore, time is of essence to stop wetland degradation and ensure their restoration, wise use and sustainable management.

Today, at National level, the celebration of World Wetlands Day is devoted to inspections in the urban wetlands of the City of Kigali to ensure enforcement and compliance with the regula-

tions on wetlands management and wise use, and to call upon people for wetlands restoration.

"Well managed and restored wetlands improve communities' resilience to climate change and disaster risks that our Country is facing through heavy rain or drought, thanks to wetlands capacity to absorb and release water in due course. I therefore call upon everyone to contribute and play an upper role in preserving, protecting and restoring our wetlands for the common benefit of everyone. Especially I encourage private sector to invest in wetlands rehabilitation and restoration initiatives in our Country" Said Hon. Minister of Environment Dr. Jeanne d'Arc MUJAWAMARIYA.

“To ensure sustainable use of wetlands: all illegal activities in wetland must be avoided and we ought to work together so that other unsustainable activities operating within wetlands come to an end. Achieving these goals will only be possible with the involvement of all stakeholders. We are working with local government authorities, civil society, private sector, development partners and government agencies and media to ensure the true value of wetlands to our socio-economic development is understood and we act accordingly” she added.

Celebrating the world wetlands day is a good opportunity for Rwanda to build upon the achievements made in environmental conservation and protection especially in the effort of wise use of wetlands and restoration of degraded ones.

A well restored wetland can provide many of the services per-

formed by the original natural wetland including revive biodiversity, replenish and filter water, store carbon, blunt the impact of floods and storms, improve livelihoods, boost eco-tourism and enhance well-being.

Wetland Protection Status

Rwanda has made tremendous progress in wetland restoration. 935 wetlands, covering a total area of 176,337 ha, are classified according to characteristics such as soil type, vegetation, hydrology, and climatic zone. The Prime Minister’s Order number 006/03 of 30/01/2017, which lists all swamp lands, their characteristics, boundaries and determining modalities of their use, development and management.

Furthermore, Rwanda has made substantial progress in wetland management, particularly in the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded wetlands for example:

Restoration of Nyandungu Eco park and initiation of wetlands rehabilitation projects in the city of Kigali, to be rehabilitated Rugenge, Rwintare and lower Nyabugogo wetland which will be rehabilitated as part of the already existing project, Rwanda Urban Development Project (RUDPII), relocation of industries, commercial and household infrastructures from wetlands, development of wetland masterplan for Kigali City, among others.

About the Ramsar Convention

“The Ramsar Convention” is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the “wise use”, or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories. Rwanda ratified Ramsar convention by Law n° 37/2003 of 29 December 2003.

IMF MD commended Rwanda’s commitment to fighting climate change



IMF Managing Director (second from right) watering a tree she planted in Nyandungu Eco Park

The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva commended Rwanda’s commitment to fighting climate change and being the first African country to access the IMF’s financing facility to build resilience to climate change.

The IMF Managing Director was in Rwanda for a three day on a three-day working visit from 24th to 26th January 2023. Her visit aimed to expand climate financing schemes for developing countries and explain the IMF’s new Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST)

She participated in round table discussions with East African finance ministers and Central Bank governors to discuss the process to acquire climate financing under the RST.

She also engaged with Rwandan green entrepreneurs and young environmentalists to discuss climate change challenges and available opportunities that could help to alleviate the severe shocks due to climate change in vulnerable countries including Rwanda.

"I came to Rwanda knowing that

what I would find here would be interesting. This is a very good project but it would be really effective and impactful if the concept gets translated all over Rwanda and it becomes the way of action where it's appropriate" she said in a conversation held at Nyandungu Eco Park with young environmentalists.

The Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Juliet Kabera, explained that after restoring Nyandungu wetland turned into an Eco Park, Rwanda has embarked on the rehabilitation

of five additional wetlands in the City of Kigali. The rehabilitation of those wetland will not only contribute to floods control, but also promote ecosystem services and people's wellbeing.

"At the IMF, we are making a big financial contribution to fight climate change, and we are more importantly changing the way we, at the IMF think about development. It is inclusive of reducing emissions and improving resilience of our societies our economies, our people and our planet" Georgieva revealed.

REMA launched a five year Project to improve hazardous waste management

FEEDiFUTURE
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REMA

COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE (CACCI)

Official Launch of CACCI Rwanda

Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) & AKADEMIYA2063

January 12, 2023 9:30-14:00 CAT
Kigali Marriott Hotel

www.akademiya2063.org

In view of implementing the African Union Commission (AUC) resolution to support African Union (AU) member states to comply with their obligations under the Paris Agreement, AKADEMIYA2063 and the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) are partnering under the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Climate Change Initiative (CACCI).

REMA and AKADEMIYA2063 Launched this Comprehensive Africa Climate Change Initiative (CACCI) project and officiate that partnership through the agreement entitled: "Collaborative Research Agreement between REMA

and AKADEMIYA2063" on January 12, 2023.

Funded by the United States International Development Agency (USAID) and implemented in partnership with the AU, Michigan State University, AKADEMIYA2063, and the African Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ANAPRI, formerly ReNAPRI), the CACCI project will provide targeted countries with the capacity and expertise to develop their measurement, reporting, and verification mechanisms (MRV).

It will also support the five-year review of countries' collective prog-

ress toward the long-term goals as a contribution to the global evaluation of the Paris Agreement.

Through the CACCI project, AKADEMIYA2063 will support Rwanda in meeting its commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change.

This support will focus on designing and implementing programmatic policies and investments to support sustainable and inclusive growth and promote climate mitigation and adaptation across their food systems, notably through Rwanda's climate action and its National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

“AKADEMIYA2063 is pleased to partner with REMA in our efforts to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation in Africa and around the world,” said Dr. Ousmane Badiane, AKADEMIYA2063 Executive Chairperson. “The CACCI project, which we are implementing with the support of USAID, is a timely response to Africa’s capacity needs to accelerate progress in climate action across the continent. This partnership with REMA will avail the scientific expertise and research capacity required to provide high-quality support to accompany Member States in achieving their NDC and NAP targets,” he added.

The project objectives will be attained through three main components, namely: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) implementation support, M&E and mutual accountability, and capacity building.

According to the Deputy Director General of REMA, Faustin Munyazikwiye, the CACCI project is an excellent opportunity to complement national efforts in climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as mobilizing climate finance.

“The partnership between REMA and AKADEMIYA2063 in the CACCI project is an important step towards the implementation of Rwanda’s climate actions in our NAPs. We are hopeful that this project will contribute to ongoing interventions to build the resilience of our economy to the effects of climate change and provide solutions to protect our farmers from the negative effects of climate change that need to be even more holistic and innovative.”

In 2020, Rwanda submitted its Updated Nationally Determined Contribution for both mitigation & adaptation measures to contribute to the goals of the Paris Agreement. These Climate actions need to be implemented in order to achieve its envisioned low-carbon development and

climate. In order to participate effectively in NDC implementation, tracking progress and reporting, Rwanda Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) requires mobilization of stakeholders and capacity building on data collection and computation. The need to build capacity and need for disaggregated and predictive evidence to support response measures cannot be overemphasized. The partnership between REMA and AKADEMIYA2063 under CACCI and beyond is a major step” He added

Rwanda is responsible for just 0.003 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Yet, it is among the world’s most vulnerable countries according to the ND-GAIN Index, Rwanda is ranked 124 on the Climate Vulnerability Index, and the future climate outlook predicts more extreme climate change impact (longer warm days, erratic rains, and severe storms) - by 2050.

About AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa-based non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal.

Inspired by the ambitions of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and grounded in the recognition of the central importance of solid knowledge and evidence-based systems, the vision of AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa with the expertise we need for the Africa we want. This expertise must be responsive to the continent’s needs for data and analysis to ensure high-quality policy design and execution. Inclusive, evidence-informed policymaking is key to meeting the continent’s development aspirations, creating wealth, and improving populations’ livelihoods.

AKADEMIYA2063’s overall mission is to create, across Africa and led from its headquarters in Rwanda, state-of-the-art technical capacities to support the ef-

forts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of Agenda 2063 of transforming national economies to boost economic growth and prosperity.

Following from its vision and mission, the main goal of AKADEMIYA2063 is to help meet Africa’s needs at the continental, regional and national levels in terms of data, analytics, and mutual learning for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of its outcomes by a critical mass of countries.

AKADEMIYA2063 strives to meet its goals through programs organized under five strategic areas—policy innovation, knowledge systems, capacity creation and deployment, operational support, and data management, digital products, and technology—as well as innovative partnerships and outreach activities. Visit www.akademiya2063.org.

About CACCI

The Comprehensive Africa Climate Change Initiative (CACCI) is a joint climate initiative with regional and country-level stakeholders to provide support to partner country governments to implement policies and programmatic investments; strengthen national, regional, and local capacity to meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets and develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs); and provide broader climate and environmental policy support.

The CACCI mission is to contribute to USAID’s climate change strategy to align development in humanitarian assistance programs with NDCs, NAPs, and partner country climate policy priorities.

CACCI-Africa is led by AKADEMIYA2063 and ANAPRI. The five-year vision for the work is for up to 25 African countries to have developed, officially approved, and begun to implement policy and investment plans.

About REMA

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) is an institution mandated to facilitate coordination and oversight of the implementation of national environmental policy and subsequent legislation.

Overall, REMA is responsible for ensuring that environmental issues and climate change are integrated into Rwanda's development.

REMA's mission is to promote and ensure the protection of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources through decentralized governance structures and seek a national position to emerging global issues with a view to enhancing the well-being of the Rwandan people.

Its vision is for all sectors of Rwandan society to value and undertake sound environmental management and rational use of natural resources in order to con-

tribute to the national aspirations for sustainable development.

Specifically, the entity is mandated to mainstream environmental concerns and climate change across all sectors to improve performance and productivity, reduce Rwanda's vulnerability to climate change, control pollution, and ensure compliance with environmental regulations for sustainable development. Visit www.rema.gov.rw.

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communications@rema.gov.rw

