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Designed by NSHIMIYIMANA Aime D'Eric



Hon. Dr. Vincent BIRUTA, Minister of Natural Resources during Umuganda to mark World Environment Day 2017 in Gakenke District



Meteo Rwanda's stand Exhibition

Rwanda Meteorology Agency Marks the World Environmental Day

On Friday 05th June 2017, Rwanda Meteorology Agency Meteo Rwanda joined the rest of the world to celebrate the World Environment Day under the theme: "Connecting People to Nature" a theme which calls up on everyone to appreciate the beauty and importance of the nature, and to take forward the call to protect the Earth that we share.

The celebration of the World Environment Day was marked with several activities, including community work 'Umuganda' for ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation around Base River, a tour of activities implemented by the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project phase two (LVEMP II) in Gakenke District, awarding winners of the schools environmental competitions and an exhibition featuring key stakeholders and actors from the environment sector Meteo Rwanda included.

During the exhibition, participants were explained different services and products offered by Rwanda Meteorology Agency including weather forecast, climatological data, map room, infrastructure in place among others.

In his remarks, Hon. Vincent Biruta, the Minister of Natural Resources expressed that it is the responsibility of each and every one to protect and take care of environment.

He also noted that Rwanda, through its policies, laws and regulations, has made environment protection a key priority and a center of its efforts in the quest to building a green, sustainable development. The country's Vision 2020, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Green Growth and climate resilience Strategy, among others, are some of the key policies and strategies which highlight the country's commitment to environment protection and climate resilience.



Mr. Twahirwa Anthony, the Division Manager of Weather/Climate Services and Application Division told the participants to always use weather and climate information in their planning with aim of increasing their productivity but also for sustainable development

Citizens following proceedings to celebrate World Environment Day 2017

Rwanda Meteorology Agency Hosts consultants on Rwanda Agriculture Crop Insurance Scheme

On Thursday 8th June 2017, Mr, John Ntaganda Semafara, the Director General of Rwanda Meteorology Agency (Meteo Rwanda) hosted KMD Consultants who are helping the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in setting up the Agriculture Insurance scheme (MINAGRI).

Ms Kagwera Edith, Agribusiness and Agriculture Financing Specialist at MINAGRI said that they have been having so many insurance companies to finance agriculture sector coming and going. She said that MINAGRI convened a meeting with its stakeholders in November 2017 whereby one of resolution was to have Agriculture Scheme Insurance established and enhanced. The MINAGRI was also tasked to design a process of how the latter can be achieved hence the reason of hiring KMD to help set up this scheme.

She said that the consultants shall first study the market, help develop the Agriculture Insurance Scheme and assist during the implementation phase.



Mr. Ayandev Saha, the General Manager of KMD said that they started with having meetings with stakeholders to gather ideas so that they can know which crop insurance scheme shall be applicable within Rwandan context.

He said that weather and climate information is critical in this context as they shall be relied on to know Rwanda Climate and micro climates but also to learn rainfall patterns.

Mr. Ayandev said that at the end of their consultants, they shall design a prototype product that shall be used by MINAGRI in choosing the crop insurance scheme that shall benefit Rwanda farmers.

Mr. John Ntaganda Semafara, The Director General of Rwanda Meteorology Agency said that Meteo Rwanda used to host such consultants firms with the same ambitions but who failed to deliver and satisfy Rwandans needs especially farmers.

He noted that if well done, the scheme shall solve issues of food insecurity and several losses that farmers have been facing in this sector that highly contribute to Rwanda's economy.

He pointed out that if they are to deliver, they should rely on accurate weather and climate data.

The initiative to establish the Agriculture Insurance Scheme is one of the outcomes of the bilateral agreements entered between the Republic Of Rwanda and the Kingdom of Morocco during the last visit of the King of Morocco to Rwanda

Meteorological information to be used in development of Rwanda Agriculture Insurance Scheme



On this Wednesday, 14th June 2017, Mr. John Ntaganda Semafara the Director General of Rwanda Meteorology Agency received the delegation from the Kingdom of Morocco that is in Rwanda to assess the nature on an appropriate Agriculture Insurance Scheme to benefit Rwandan farmers.

As it was highlighted by Mr. Fehd Bouab the Financial Director at the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries for the Kingdom of Morocco, this visit is in line with the Bilateral Agreement signed in between the Kingdom of Morocco, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources of the Republic of Rwanda, the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries for the Kingdom of Morocco and Mutuelle Agricole Marocaine d'Assurances (MAMDA) to jointly establish and develop a Rwanda National Agriculture Insurance scheme.

Mr. Ali Seffar, the Development Director from MAMDA said that reliable weather and climate information is critical to make this Agriculture Crop Insurance succeed. He added that meteorological data shall be used to analyze losses that are encountered by farmers that are resulted from climatic weather conditions like floods, winds, drought among others.

The Director General at Rwanda Meteorology Agency informed them that Meteo Rwanda has developed its meteorological infrastructure with aim of gathering accurate weather and climate information. He assured them that Meteo Rwanda is ready to work closely with them providing data whenever they are needed.

“We have a serious concern of our farmers who have not been accessing loans from financial institutions because of climate uncertainty. We believe that this is one of solutions to boost agricultural harvest and fight food insecurity” added Mr. John Ntaganda Semafara.

The Director General informed them that Meteo Rwanda is able to provide raw data but also the processed information available at <http://maproom.meteorwanda.gov.rw/maproom/>.

Rwanda Meteorology Agency currently provides weather and climate information at a resolution of 4km grid with a network of 304 meteorological stations, a Doppler weather radar, ground satellite receivers such as PUMA and MESA.



THE PROTOCOL TO PROMOTE COOPERATION IN THE PROVISION OF METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES WITHIN EAC PARTNER STATES UNDER RATIFICATION PROCESS



On this Friday, 16th June 2017, the Taskforce on the East African Community Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services concluded its two days meeting to develop the roadmap and the strategies for the implementation of the protocol on cooperation in meteorological services.

The Protocol allows Partner States to cooperate in the Planning, designing and development of weather and climate observation networks and meteorological telecommunication systems; the processing and analysis of data and sharing of meteorological information and the development of early warning systems.

Mr. John Ntaganda Semafara, the Director General at Rwanda Meteorology Agency welcomed the delegates from the sister states of the East African Community. The Director General noted that Rwanda has indeed received a copy of the East African Community Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services and informed the meeting that the ratification process is on-going.

The Director General said that the weather has no boundaries hence a need for strong partnership and collaboration of EAC Partner States in monitoring the weather and provision of advisories on severe weather and climate events that may affect the region.

“I have confidence that the Task Force shall develop the required roadmap and strategies for the implementation of the Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services to enable the EAC Partner States have efficient climate services that will support the citizen’s socioeconomic activities” reiterated John Ntaganda Semafara, Director General.

Mr. Ruben K. Barakiza, Senior Meteorologist in Burundi National Meteorological and Hydrological Services pointed out that the ratification of Protocol will improve the ongoing initiatives in the region including severe weather forecasting and early warning services for disaster risk reduction, climate information needed for climate change adaptation among others.

About the Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services

Cooperation among EAC Partner States in the Meteorological sector is guided by Article 100 of the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community. Under the provision of the Treaty, Partner States undertook to cooperate in the provision of meteorological services.

The 11th Council of Ministers Meeting held on 4th April 2006, directed the Secretariat in consultation with meteorological services to develop an MoU on cooperation within Meteorological Services to enable the harmonization of meteorological policies in the region, facilitate pooling and mobilization of resources and development of regional meteorological institutions.

The Protocol was signed at the 33rd Council of Ministers meeting on 27th February 2016 in Arusha, Tanzania and forwarded to Partner States for ratification process.

METEO RWANDA'S FORECASTERS UNDERGOING TWO WEEK LONG TRAINING TO ENHANCE THEIR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

From 19th to 30th June 2017, Meteo Rwanda in partnership with the Met Office (the United Kingdom's National Meteorological Service), is carrying out training of Forecasting Officers aimed at enhancing their professional skills and competencies.



The training is sponsored by the Government of Rwanda under the project Meteo Rwanda/FONERWA. Under this training, participants will cover a wide range of topics which shall enable them to improve capability in forecasting process that supports user's demand on weather and climate for informed decision.

Mr. Twahirwa Anthony, Division Manager of Weather/Climate Services and application Division commended the strong partnership between Meteo Rwanda and the Met Office. He said that the training shall improve understanding of meteorology so that we can better serve our clients.

"The training shall enable our staff to have practical knowledge that they shall always apply in fulfilling their responsibilities. We need to keep updating our skills so that we can cope with the evolving technologies," said Anthony.

Ndikuyo Mishak, a Forecasting Officer being trained said that the training will help him increase knowledge in his forecasting skills and how better to interpret satellite imageries, Radar images and other forecasting models with the aim of developing more weather tailored products for end users.

"This is an occasion for me to familiarize with different models used in forecasting process and their interpretations so that I can improve on services we deliver;" said Mishak.

"Currently there is an increasing demand of weather and climate information due to the climate change hence a need for us to keep on improving the accuracy of the forecast" added Mishak.

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The trainers are Elisabeth Carlton and Yannick Foin, both employees of the Met Office. Elisabeth designed, developed and delivered a forecaster training program for Meteo Rwanda in 2012 and she has since been involved in leading international training interventions globally, including 3 International Aviation Seminars organized by the World Meteorological Organization (part of the United Nations)

While Yannick works as an International Training and Development Consultant at the Met Office. He started his career in the French Air Force then worked as a meteorologist in the private sector and joined the Met Office 6 years ago.

"Yannick and I are delighted to offer this training to the forecasters at Meteo Rwanda" says Elisabeth "The aim of the training is to improve the knowledge and skills in how to interpret observations, remote sensing and numerical weather prediction models. This will improve the forecast process and instil the forecasters with a robust methodology, which will in turn, increase understanding and improve the forecasting service to end users".

About Meteo Rwanda's Project

Strengthening Meteo Rwanda's Weather and Climate Services to Support Development is the Project that is being run by Meteo Rwanda and which is funded through Government of Rwanda's Climate Change Fund (FONERWA).

The project aims to improve the range of weather and climate information available for informed decisions making at all levels in Rwanda, promote its understanding and application. It will achieve this by involving users in the development of new services, making investments in improved observations, forecasting and analysis and introducing new communication channels.

The project has four objectives namely: to create and enhance engagement between Meteo Rwanda and key stakeholders, to provide scientific knowledge required and skills required of Meteo Rwanda staff, to increase access to weather and climate information to at least 1 million users through a range of communication channels and to enhance awareness of weather and climate issues

Farmers acknowledge improved weather forecast in the recently Twelfth Agriculture Show, 22-27 June 2017

A big number of farmers who visited the stand of Rwanda Meteorology Agency during the 12th Agriculture Show organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources acknowledged the improvements in the weather forecast accuracy though further improvements need to be done in dissemination of the seasonal forecasts.

The week-long National Agriculture Show took place from 22nd to 27th June 2017 under the theme: “Adopt climate resilient technologies to improve farmer livelihoods” and was attended by 150 exhibitors according to reports from the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources.

Meteo Rwanda counted over 120 visitors who registered in the Visitors’ Book excluding those who visited but did not register themselves.

Their comments recommend efforts done by Meteo Rwanda in improving weather forecast accuracy while others show that there is still a gap in dissemination of weather and climate information especially seasonal forecasts.

Mr. Fulgence Gasigwa a Mechanical Engineer at AIF Rwanda said that Meteo Rwanda have achieved a lot that create confidence of meteorological services in Rwanda. He pointed out that there is a need for weather mobile application that will enable users access timely weather updates on their smart devices.

Mr. Habimana Andree a farmer based in Gakenke District said that weather and climate information enable them to know planting season.

Mr. Nshimiyimana a farmer based in Kamonyi District said that it would be an advantage to farmers to receive seasonal weather forecast before the beginning of planting season.

Davis Mugira the Manager at Spiderbit Company has raised two challenges one of information delivery another one of channels used in dissemination of weather and climate information.

Nteziryayo Emmanuel an Agriculture Extension Officer from Burera District said that he would like to get short range and long range forecast on his mobile device so that in turn he could share this information to farmers within his village.

Several comments were given that shall enable Meteo Rwanda improve its services delivery focusing on what users need.

Measures being undertaken to improve dissemination of weather forecast, include the three years National Communication Strategy of Weather and Climate Information recently produced by Meteo Rwanda that shall start being implemented in Financial Year 2017/2018.

Meteo Rwanda is also developing the Weather Mobile Application that shall enable users access on their smart devices timely weather and climate information.