

Eastern Province dwellers commend access to safe water

BY THÉOGÈNE NSENGIMANA

People in the Eastern province have acclaimed Japan funded water projects in the area. They say the projects have not only brought to them safe water but also improved welfare.

The resident from Rwamagana, Kayonza and Kirehe districts expressed the feeling on Thursday during a media tour organized by the Japan Embassy to Rwanda to equip journalists with in-depth knowledge about Japan's support to Rwanda.

Madeleine Mukankuranziza, a resident of Bitoma I village in Gatore sector, Kirehe district said a public tap established in their village improved their hygiene.

She said "water has been a challenge for us for several years. We used to fetch from the marshland, a distance that was not practicable. It was not easy for us to wash neither our bodies nor our clothes since we had to use sparingly the scarce water from the marshland. But for today, we are clean due to water that has come closer to us".

"Since my childhood, water has been a great challenge. We used to get a jerry can of unsafe water from the marshland at Rwf200. For now we praise the Lord as the problem is over", said Emmanuel Nzirorera, a resident of Bitoma II village.

Accordingly to the water service providers, they operate water projects supported by Japanese through the Japan International cooperation Agency (JICA) includes the Rwakibogo water supply that feeds over 43000 people in Mwulire, Kigabiro and Munyaga sectors in Rwamagana district through 77 public taps and 265 private customers and Gatore water supply system that feeds the whole territory of Kayonza district and Kigina, Gatore, Mushikiri and Gahara sectors in Kirehe district.

The projects were built and rehabilitated by Japanese through the JICA.

Mr. Kiyokazu Ota, the Japanese Ambassador to Rwanda said they want to contribute to Rwanda's universal access to safe water target for 2017.

He said "I found Rwandans disciplined and hard working. My country also passed through the same situation where colonials were saying that sanitation was a challenge for us. But we have now achieved a cleanest country. We want to help you achieve your goal, that's why we are here as JICA as the Embassy people to work with you and for you".

Japan's support on water and sanitation comprises of different programs like the program for improvement of water and sanitation namely the Rural Water Supply Project (Phase I and II) that supplied respectively 43000 and 55000 people in Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma and Kirehe districts from 2006 to 2014 with the total fund of Rwf11, 414 million.

The Project for Improvement of Water Supply and Sanitation in the Southern Part of the Eastern Province (PURA-SANI Project) worth Rwf1, 925 million was implemented in the same districts from 2007 to 2011.

Ongoing projects include the Phase III of the Rural Water supply Project that aims to construct four water supply systems expected to feed 33000 people and provide capacity building for operation staff and technicians for better maintenance. The project is expected to cost Rwf5, 822 million.

The other project that is going on is the Project for Strengthening Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supply System that is expected to cost

Rwf2, 874 million while Japanese volunteers in Rwanda Water Security Team (RW-SAT) have been dispatched to help in operating and repairing hand pumps, support water management cooperative facilities, help laboratory staff to improve the quality of water and carry out hygiene research and campaigns.

Japan, through the JICA extends its support to Rwanda with a wide modernity through technical cooperation, Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan and grant aid.

Apart from the water and sanitation sector terms of comprehensive capacity building for self reliance (policy implementation, institutional, organizational, individual, infrastructure, management, operations and maintenance).