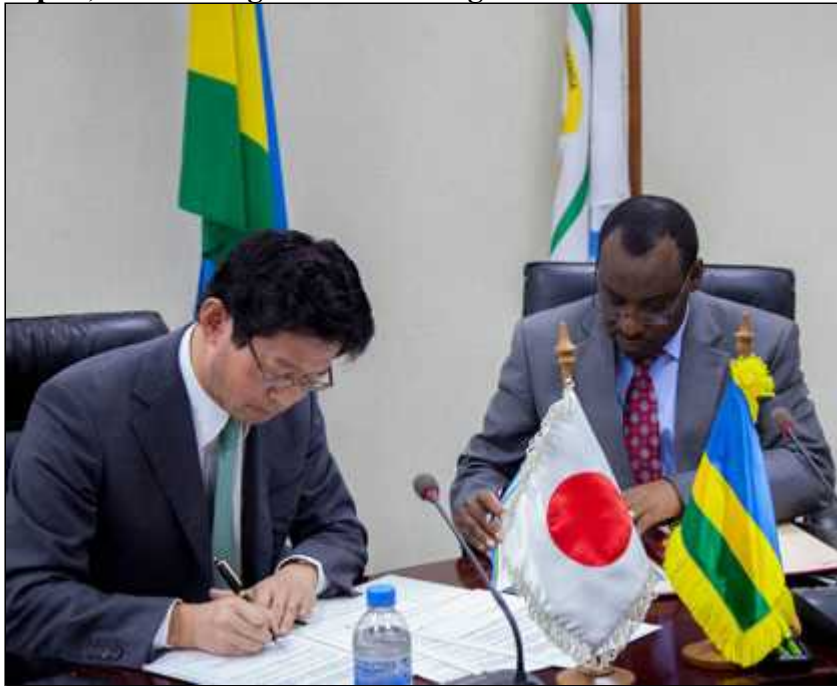


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Japan, Rwanda sign Rwf10bn irrigation deal



Finance and Economic Planning minister Claver Gatete (R) and the Japanese ambassador to Rwanda Kazuya Ogawa sign an irrigation funding deal in Kigali yesterday. (T. Kisambira)

Agricultural productivity in the country could further be enhanced, thanks to a grant from the Japanese government.

The financing agreement, worth \$15 million (about Rwf10.3 billion), was signed in Kigali yesterday.

The funds will support the development of an irrigation scheme in Ngoma District, the Minister for Finance and Economic planning, Amb. Claver Gatete, said.

The fund will also help improve and stabilise agricultural productivity through construction of a water reservoir and irrigation facilities that will enable farmers utilise water more efficiently and promote intensive farming.

“The fund will be used to construct a 14.9-metre dam with a capacity of 960,000m³, irrigation canals and regulating tanks. It will also provide solar panels, pump facilities and provide operational and maintenance of the irrigation facilities among others,” Amb. Gatete said during the signing ceremony in Kigali.

The support, he added, is in line with the second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy and the country’s efforts to develop agriculture sector, which is one of the main drivers of national economic development and poverty reduction.

Targets

It will also support efforts to diminish the potential effects of climate change such as change in rainfall patterns.

This will increase productivity in agriculture sector, reduce poverty, Innocent Musabyimana, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture said.

Kazuya Ogawa, the Japanese ambassador to Rwanda, said the project will aid the provision of water to more than 300 hectares of farmland and 265 hectares of upland fields and 35 hectares of paddy fields.

“In addition to this irrigation project, in agriculture sector, Japan has dispatched an irrigation advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and will start giving technical assistance to small holder farmers,” Ogawa said.

“The project is designed to improve livelihoods of all small holder farmers through various activities. This shows the Japanese continuous support to the government and we intend to continue supporting the country in achieving its economic objectives.”

The project is expected to commence by October.

Japan has been supporting the agriculture sector through technical cooperation in areas like small and medium enterprises development such as smallholders market-oriented agriculture project and advisory services.