

Japan extends Rwf5.8 billion grant for rural water supply

By: PETERSON TUMWEBAZE



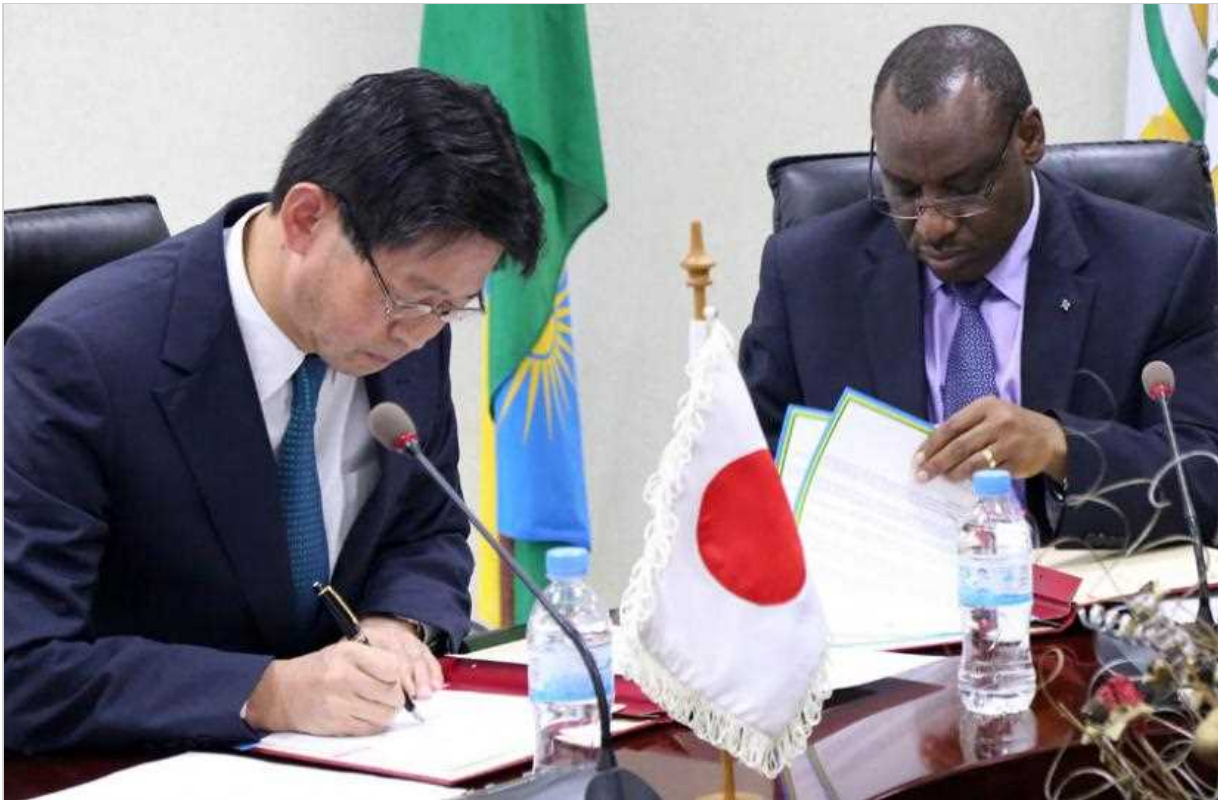
Finance minister Claver Gatete (R) chats with Ogawa at the signing ceremony in Kigali yesterday. (John Mbanda)

The Government of Rwanda and Japan yesterday signed a grant agreement worth \$8.4 million (about Rwf5.8 billion) to supply clean and safe water in rural areas.

An estimated 33,000 residents from Ngoma, Kayonza and Gatsibo districts, all in the Eastern Province, will benefit from the project.

The project will be implemented by the Water and Sanitation Corporation (Wasac) with support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica).

The funds will be used to construct piped water supply system, train operation staff and technicians.



Finance Minister Claver Gatete (R) and Japanese ambassador to Rwanda Kazuya Ogawa signing the agreement yesterday.

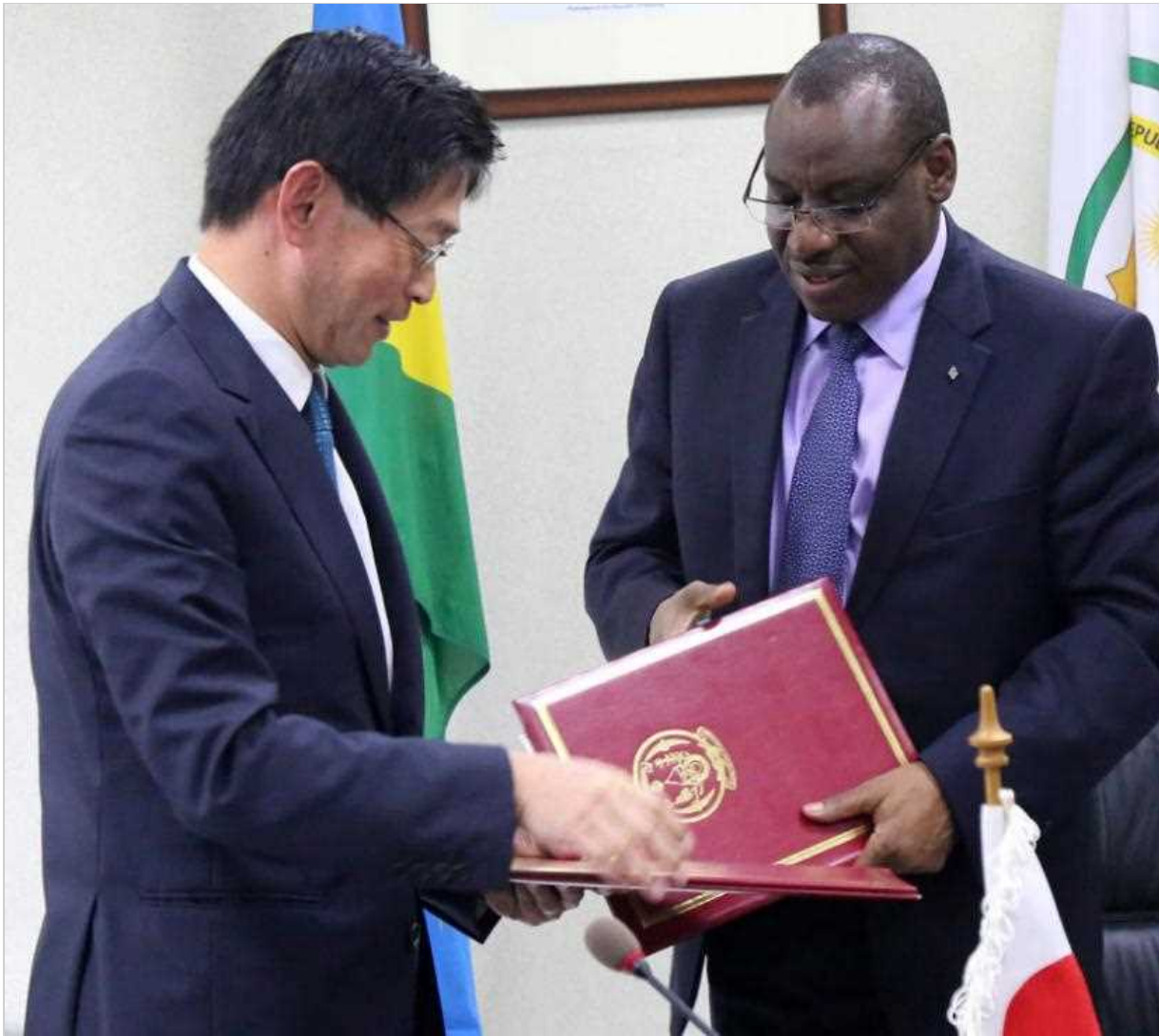
According to Claver Gatete, the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning, the government aims to increase access to clean and safe water from the current 75 per cent of the population to 100 percent by 2020.

“Access to clean water is one of our key second Economic Development and Poverty Eradication Strategy (EDPRSII) targets; we must, therefore, achieve 100 per cent (on this),” he said.

When water is closer to the people, children attend school rather than trek long distances to fetch water.

This grant is the third phase of the Rural Water Supply project for the Eastern Province.

The first phase, which was completed in March 2008, cost \$6.1 million and benefited residents of Ngoma, Kayonza and Rwamagana districts.



Finance Minister Claver Gatete (R) and Japanese ambassador to Rwanda Kazuya Ogawa exchanging documents after signing yesterday. John Mbanda.

The second phase was completed in July 2013 at \$16 million. Residents from the 11 sectors in Ngoma and Kirehe districts benefited.

During phase one, 43,000 residents were able to get access to clean water and in phase two reached 55,000 beneficiaries.

In total, more than 131,000 are expected to benefit from the entire project.

The project has contributed to improving safe water access rate in the Eastern Province from 57.7 per cent in 2006 to 66.6 per cent in 2011.

Kazuya Ogawa, the Japanese ambassador to Rwanda, said the grant will help strengthen the operations and maintenance of rural water supply systems.

“Japan has supported the construction of two facilities of water supply under its grant assistance for grassroots and human security projects,” he said.

The project will also allow women to get involved in income generating activities thus increasing household incomes, the envoy added.



Finance Minister Claver Gatete (R) and Japanese ambassador to Rwanda Kazuya Ogawa during a press briefing after signing yesterday. (All photos by John Mbanda)

Stanley Nkubito, Wasac's water projects and implementation manager, said efforts to build modern infrastructure that will help boost access to clean and safe water are ongoing.

“We understand the importance of having clean water in our national economic development, we are therefore working around the clock to meet our obligation in regard to clean and safe water across the country.”

Japan's volume of aid assistance has recently increased from Rwf3 billion in 2012/13 to Rwf17 billion in the Financial Year 2013/14.

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