

ActionAid Rwanda held a consultative meeting with Rwandan media practitioners to collect views on the ongoing baseline study. Officials unveiled that this survey aims at establishing benchmarks necessary to assess the progress in participation of special interest groups in decision-making process before, during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery period.

“It considered the status of the decision -making process before and during the pandemic, and currently that the society is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic,” observed Ines Mwangavu, the Acting Executive Director of Actionaid Rwanda, November 9 in the capital, Kigali

“The goal of this baseline study was to establish benchmarks against which the progress will be compared in the efforts of increasing participation of special interest groups in shaping the response and management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda,” added Mwangavu.

The survey underway in Nyanza, Karongi and Musanze districts, is conducted by ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with the International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL) will show the impact of Covid-19 on the participation of special interest groups in decision making processes and used as a baseline in assessing the impact of COVID-19 in their participation.

Actionaid Rwanda Consultants have already collected the views of teachers, representatives of youths, people with disabilities, informal sector and national women’s council. Others include representatives of cooperatives working with AAR, the elderly people and smallholder farmers.

The draft report findings indicate that COVID-19 pandemic worsened the participation of women and the old people in the decision-making process.

“The older people were tagged as the most vulnerable group to new infections, and they were recommended to limit their interactions with other people, including not attending meetings where decisions are made. On the other hand, because of the urgency that involved the decisions that were made during the COVID-19 pandemic, some groups including women were not given opportunities to contribute to decision-making process,” said Mwangavu.

She said that the aim of workshops is to convene dialogue with local and national institutions – government and non-government representative to solicit feedback

from the report and discuss on how to strengthen participation of the vulnerable groups in Government and civil society initiatives on COVID-19.

Over 40 journalists participated in the one-day consultative meeting and reiterated commitment to report stories on the special interested groups in an effort to ensure growing participation in decision-making process.

Actionaid Rwanda senior staff at the workshop included Jeannette Mugiraneza, Emmanuel Mugiraneza who moderated and coordinated the workshop, and Clare Katwesigye, the Women's Rights Advocacy Coordinator.