More than 15,900 residents of Nasho Sector in Kirehe District now have reliable access to clean water and improved sanitation, thanks to the Kagese Water Supply System inaugurated on Thursday, Feb. 19. The project also connects 60 schools and one health center to safe water, while providing upgraded sanitation facilities in schools and health centers.

The water supply system was constructed by AYATEKE Star Company in partnership with WaterAid and financed by WaterAid Japan through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan and the district authorities.

Across Kirehe and neighboring Bugesera District, tens of thousands of residents benefit from improved water and hygiene services, easing the burden of water collection for women and girls and creating safer, healthier communities.

H.E. Ambassador NAKAJŌ Kazuya, ambassador of Japan to Rwanda, said the project represents a step toward protecting human dignity.

“We believe that the protection of human dignity starts with guaranteeing safe and healthy lives,” he said. “Access to clean water is fundamental in protecting communities from diseases and promoting wellbeing.”

The Nasho Sector project, which began in March 2025, included the construction of 30.4 kilometers of water pipelines, 20 new water points, and rehabilitation of six existing water points. Additional infrastructure included a 100-cubic-meter reservoir and four smaller tanks totaling 140 cubic meters. The investment for Nasho Sector alone was estimated at 806 million Rwandan francs.

Bruno Rangira, Mayor of Kirehe District emphasized the importance of community engagement.
“We call upon residents to improve their social wellbeing through cleanliness and hygiene,” he said. “Our district remains committed to meeting Rwanda’s NST2 targets, which include universal access to clean water for all.”

Vestine Mukeshimana, country director of WaterAid Rwanda, highlighted the broader impact of the project. “Beyond infrastructure, this means fewer waterborne diseases, more time for women and girls, and safer service delivery in health facilities,” she said. “Safer and sustainable water services are foundational for human rights and development. When water flows reliably, health improves; when

sanitation is safe, dignity is protected; when hygiene practices are sustained, communities become resilient."

Mukeshimana also emphasized that WASH — water, sanitation, and hygiene — drives education outcomes, economic productivity, gender equality, and climate resilience.

"Our work focuses not only on building infrastructure but also on strengthening systems to ensure services last," she said.

Since 2022, WaterAid Rwanda has constructed over 100 kilometers of pipelines in Kirehe and Bugesera districts, built more than 77 water points, expanded storage capacity, improved sanitation in schools and health facilities, and supported more than 1,500 households with hygiene improvements. Hundreds of community hygiene promoters and water user committee members were trained to maintain services and ensure sustainability. The cumulative investment across these four years is estimated at 2.68 billion Rwandan francs.

The project is part of a six-year commitment focusing on consolidating system performance and reliability, strengthening governance and accountability, enhancing climate resilience, and ensuring sustained service delivery in schools and health facilities.

Rangira reinforced the district's commitment to long-term sustainability.
"These services are only effective if residents maintain them," he said. "The district will continue to work with partners to ensure clean water reaches every household and that hygiene practices are sustained."

The success of the project reflects strong partnerships among the Government of Japan, WaterAid, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JICA, district authorities, WASAC, implementing partners such as AYATEKE Star Company, and the communities themselves. Upcoming phases include expansion in Bugesera District to extend water and sanitation services further.

Mukeshimana said during the handover ceremony that the project represents more than infrastructure.
"Today we do not hand over only infrastructure; we hand over health, dignity, and opportunity," she said. "This project demonstrates what sustained bilateral

cooperation can achieve when infrastructure, systems, and community ownership work together.”

The handover was a testament to strategic planning, partnership, and the transformative power of water in shaping lives, communities, and the future of rural Rwanda.