The Government of Rwanda, through the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have launched two projects to mitigate food losses through energy efficiency.

The two projects launched on May 24, 2023 were implemented using funds mobilized by the Government of Rwanda under a GCF readiness project and an FAO technical cooperation program.

Speaking at the launch, FAO Rwanda Country Representative, Coumba D. Sow underscored the need for collaboration to make these projects a success.

“The partnership between REMA, FAO, and the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold Chain aims to contribute to the reduction of post-harvest losses in Rwanda. Today’s launch is a centerpiece of the project implementation as it invokes collaboration amongst different stakeholders, including representatives of key institutions, development partners, private sector players, and technical experts’’ She noted.

The GCF funds will focus on mitigating food losses through energy-efficient and climate-friendly cooling, while the FAO support will provide technical assistance and capacity building for cold chain development in Rwanda.

The funding has been mobilized to support existing activities being implemented by the Government of Rwanda and the United Kingdom, as well as the UN Environment Program and a consortium of universities from both countries which led to the establishment of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold Chain (ACES), which is hosted by the University of Rwanda.

Further, the GCF support will contribute to the Rwanda Cooling Initiative, through which Rwanda developed ambitious Minimum Energy Performance Standards, energy labels and an online licensing system for monitoring the importation of air conditioners and refrigerators.

The funding will also support an ongoing initiative with local banks and appliance vendors that aims to increase the uptake of efficient cooling solutions.

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority is promoting sustainable cooling through a comprehensive awareness campaign and capacity building for

technicians, customs officers, and others on the trade of Ozone Depleting Substances, safety, energy efficiency, and other aspects.

Juliet Kabera, Director General, of Rwanda Environment Management Authority, said that making cold-chain part of Rwanda's critical infrastructure is key to reducing food loss, improving livelihoods, accelerating economic growth, and meeting our Vision 2050 and international commitments under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

"The support from the GCF, FAO, and UNEP will ensure the success of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cooling and Cold-Chain," Kabera added.

In addition, both projects will not only contribute to reducing post-harvest losses, but they will also contribute to increasing agricultural exports and nutritious food, increasing skilled labor and student exchange programs, creating jobs, improving livelihoods, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions among many more.