The Rwandan government and the European Union have signed an addendum to a financing agreement for €52.87 million (about Rwf55.5 billion) to support the social protection coverage in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This grant is part of the EU's €460 million package of support to Rwanda signed in September, 2014 with European Commission.

The objective of the funding is to support Rwandan Government to expand social protection and promote agriculture supply chains in the context of the Government`s COVID 19 Economic Recovery Plan through increased cash transfers and food assistance to citizens in Rwanda, and to support livelihoods for food security in response to the lockdown containment measures of the country during the COVID 19. In total, the programme will help protecting food security and livelihoods of at least 630 000 households most in need.

"The impact of COVID-19 on our economy and livelihoods in particular has called for enhanced social protection measures by ensuring that we maintain sustainable food security, reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth," said Dr. Uzziel Ndagijimana, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. "The sustained development cooperation as well as the immediate European Union's support to the Government's response to the COVID 19, illustrates, once again, the mutual trust and excellent relations shared by the European Union and the Government of Rwanda," Minister Ndagijimana added.

EU Ambassador Nicola Bellomo added "Our support comes as part of the broader #TeamEurope response. #TeamEurope is the tangible expression of European solidarity. It reflects a commitment of the EU and the EU MS to act as one, and in close cooperation with the multilateral system, in our efforts to help our partner countries deal with the COVID crisis."

The disbursements will be provided in two fixed tranches of €36 million and €15.5 million respectively during the Fiscal Year 2019/20 and 2020/21 based on satisfactory progress on the implementation of the economic recovery plan, in particular the social protection and agriculture part.

The programme will come along with a support by the World Food Programme (WFP) in monitoring and logistics to ensure that food supply chains are working effectively, so that people can have access to affordable and nutritious food in the whole country.

The social transfers will be complemented by a support to the government on the effective functioning of the supply chains so that people can have a continued access to affordable, nutritious and diversified food.

In addition to the €52 million budget support grant to the Government, the EU is also providing five additional grants to the tune of €1.8 million to civil society organisations. These organisations work in close coordination with Local Government Authorities on the COVID social protection response at grass-roots level, and cater support to some of the most vulnerable communities across the country.