

The government of Rwanda has launched a program to plant over 6.4 million fruit-bearing trees as part of a five-year project that will cost 18 billion Rwandan francs.

This initiative was officially launched in Rubavu District, Western Province, on Thursday, October 24, 2024.

Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) Dr Cyubahiro Bagabe Mark, who inaugurated the project, explained that the program aims to plant fruit trees to help the population achieve food security, combat malnutrition, and enhance resilience against climate change.

He stated, “This is a five-year project that will expand to reach many people, you can see the high hills where avocado trees will be planted and become economically viable for the residents.”

He added, “So now families will try to avoid malnutrition being labelled to their families, for example, a farmer with a 10 by 10-meter plot may plant bananas, which may not sustain them, but by planting five avocado trees, it could provide for the family, so we should not let our children suffer from malnutrition when there are food options available; we need to increase awareness.”

The initiative started on the hill of Rubavu, beginning in the Gisenyi Sector, where 556 trees were planted. A total of 5,400 trees are planned for the entire district.



The program is expected to plant 3,600 trees in schools and distribute 1,800 trees to households, with each family receiving five trees.

This project to plant over 6.4 million fruit trees is supported by Action for Environment Protection and Promotion of Agricultural Sector (APEFA), a non-governmental Organisation founded by people concerned with environmental degradation and food security in Rwanda.

The Program Manager at APEFA, Habanabakize Portais, mentioned that the tree planting will focus on indigenous species that thrive in Rwandan soil and are resilient to climate change.

He said, “The total number of trees we will plant across the country, in 11 districts, exceeds 6.4 million, primarily consisting of avocados, mangoes, and the Coeur de

Beauf tree, along with other indigenous species.”

“Many of the trees we currently have are imported, but there are also traditional trees that used to thrive in Rwandan soil. For instance, the tree known as ‘umutima w’ipfizi’ was once popular but is now rarely seen. There used to be areas filled with papaya and others.” He added.

Local residents expressed their excitement about the project’s launch. Sinzabakira Mpozembizi from the Gusenyi Sector said, “These trees are nutritious. We are going to plant them abundantly, including avocados, papayas, and others that we believe will help us develop.”

Mutoni Alphonsine stated, “Avocados are delicious, and we know that these fruit trees help prevent diseases. Starting this program has taught us the importance of planting trees. We thank the leadership for encouraging tree planting, as we know it combats malnutrition, and we will plant them in abundance.”

A total of 467,350 trees, including avocados, mangoes, papayas, and oranges, will be planted in Rubavu District.

The 11 districts where these trees will be planted include Rutsiro, Ngororero, Nyamasheke, and Rubavu in the Western Province, Gicumbi in the Northern Province, Ngoma, Kayonza, and Kirehe in the Eastern Province, Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru in the Southern Province, and Kigali City.

Of the more than 6.4 million trees to be planted nationwide, the focus will be on avocados, mangoes, papayas, pears, and other fruits that help combat malnutrition.