Burundi and Congo ready to strengthen cooperation in the agro-pastoral sector

Burundi and Congo are committed to strengthening the ties of friendship and cooperation in the agro-pastoral field, in particular through the exchange of experience of Burundian technicians with their Congolese comrades, revealed the Head of State, this Saturday, April 17, 2021, after returning from his official visit to the Republic of Congo. He said that decision is the result of a meeting with his Congolese counterpart who acknowledged that Burundi has already taken a giant leap forward in agriculture and breeding.

Accompanied by the First Lady, Her Excellency Angeline Ndayishimiye, the President of the Republic had made the trip to take part in the investiture ceremonies of the Congolese President, H.E Denis Sassou Nguesso, who has been in power since 1997 and who was reelected for a 5 years term.

The Burundian Number One wanted to specify that his participation in the investiture of President Sassou Nguesso is part of the framework of showing mutual support to the African peoples: “We are a family of the countries of Central Africa, we must support each other. If Congo was able to organize a peaceful election, we must be at its side to celebrate this success”.

His Excellency President Ndayishimiye gave a largely positive assessment of his stay in the Republic of Congo. Thanks to the fruitful exchanges he also had with his counterparts from Angola and the DRC, the Head of State confided that Burundi is gaining more and more ground at the international level in terms of relations: “Burundi is in the process of forging good relations and is well known on the international scene. Burundi’s contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in Somalia and the Central African Republic is highly beneficial”.

His Excellency the President of Burundi finally hinted that his counterparts from Congo, Angola and DRC expressed the wish to visit Burundi in order to continue their meeting as part of
further strengthening the ties of friendship and analyzing together the ways and means to consolidate peace and security in their respective countries.
(Source: www.presidency.gov.bi)

The First Lady receives in audience the WHO Representative in Burundi

The First Lady H.E Angeline NDAYISHIMIYE at the same time President of the Organization of First Ladies of Africa for Development (OPDAD-Burundi) received in audience on Tuesday April 13, 2021 the new WHO Representative in Burundi Dr. Xavier CRESPIN. He came to present the report of the workshop on investing in early childhood and a letter of thanks from World Health Organization (WHO).

After the audience, the First Lady HE Angeline NDAYISHIMIYE indicated that she was satisfied with this courtesy visit because the new WHO Representative came to present to her the report of the high-level awareness and mobilization workshop and the operational level of those in charge of the social sectors, on the importance of investing in early childhood. It was also an opportunity for the WHO Representative Dr Xavier CRESPIN to present to the First Lady a letter of congratulations and encouragement for the permanent efforts that the First Lady continues to provide through relevant interventions that she leads through her Foundation "Umugiraneza", for the promotion of the health and well-being of the populations of Burundi.

In this letter of thanks, WHO also praised the contribution of the First Lady for the holding of the advocacy and mobilization workshop with senior Government Authorities, for increased investment in early childhood development.

As for the WHO Representative in Burundi, Dr Xavier CRESPIN, he stressed that he came to congratulate the First Lady on the important activities she is carrying out with the most vulnerable communities. He said he was in the company of the Representative of UN-AIDS in Burundi, to discuss the national workshop on communication and awareness on infertility in couples, a workshop that was planned in Bujumbura on April 14, 2021. According to him, it is a taboo subject that does a lot of damage from a social point of view in the communities.

Dr Xavier CRESPIN ended his remarks by reiterating the commitment of the WHO and other partners, especially the UN-AIDS, to work with “Bonne Action Foundation Umugiraneza” as part of the implementation of its activities, especially with regard to issues related to maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)
The “Bonne Action-Umugiraneza Foundation” in collaboration with the Ministry in charge of Public Health and the WHO organized on Wednesday April 14, 2021 an awareness workshop on the issue of infertility and management approaches, to senior Government Officials, Parliamentarians, Representatives of religious denominations and senior military and police Officers.

In her speech, the First Lady H.E. Angeline NDAYISHIMIYE at the same time President of the “Umugiraneza” foundation indicated that this workshop was organized with the objective of sensitizing and mobilizing senior Government Officials on the issue of infertility and management approaches. She added that the stigma attached to infertility in Burundian society is more than a reality. The First Lady H.E. Angeline NDAYISHIMIYE deplored the behavior of some men and beautiful families who always blame the woman in an infertile couple, as if the man was always safe from this pathology.

She recalled that health specialists attest that infertility affects men and women almost equally. She then invited the men to accompany their wives during gynecological care and examinations to share this difficult situation experienced by infertile couples.

The WHO Representative in Burundi Dr Xavier CRESPIN further clarified that childlessness affects millions of people of childbearing age around the world and has an impact on their families and communities. However, infertility is still a taboo subject, laden with stigma and very often bearing an accusing finger on women, which further hinders care, underlined Dr Xavier CRESPIN.

The WHO Representative in Burundi said 186 million people and 48 million couples are affected by childlessness around the world, or about one in four couples in developing countries. Africa is the continent most affected by infertility, with reproductive difficulties affecting 15 to 30% of couples.

For its part, WHO is committed to supporting the efforts of Governments in certain areas. These include the facilitation of dialogue to place childlessness in a favorable legal and political framework, the development of guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of male and female infertility within the framework of the norms and global standards. WHO also promises technical support to countries in the development and implementation of national fertility health policies and services, fertility awareness in comprehensive national sexual education programs, collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including academic centers to strengthen political commitment, availability and capacity of health systems to deliver fertility care globally, etc.

As for the Minister having Public Health in his attributions Dr Thaddée NDIKUMANA, he thanked the First Lady who continues to promote the health and well-being of the population through “Bonne Action-Umugiraneza Foundation”.

He also indicated that the Government, through the Ministry in charge of Public Health in collaboration with the Merck Foundation, has trained 5 Gynecologists and 5 laboratory assistants abroad and specified that a center for the care of infertile couples will be implemented in the coming days at Roi Khaled Hospital.

Closing this workshop, the First Lady urged the Minister in charge of Gender and the Minister in charge of
Justice to take care of all forms of gender-based violence suffered by infertile couples, in particular women.

During the presentations, the health professionals took up some challenges and proposed solutions for a good management of infertile couples. They indicated among the challenges that the majority of couples resort to traditional practitioners adding that many people believe that infertility is a problem that only affects women, insufficient staff to take care of infertility, lack of a national agency for medically assisted procreation, poverty within families, etc.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)

National Assembly: presentation of the report on the implementation of the Government's program

The Prime Minister CPG Alain Guillaume BUNYONI presented to the parliament gathered in congress at the Kigobe hemicycle, on Thursday April 15, 2021, the report on the implementation of the Government's program for the first half of 2020-2021. According to the Prime Minister, this program was executed at 100% for the first semester and at 50% for the annual forecasts.

After the presentation by the Prime Minister of the actions of all the fifteen Government Ministries and their level of execution, the parliamentarians had the opportunity to present their observations to him and ask him questions about the implementation of this program. They also expressed the wish to see in the next reports, the level of implementation of the recommendations made during the oral questions.

Regarding the Ministry of Justice, the parliamentarians noted that some detainees who have served their sentences, some of those who have won their cases and those who have benefeted from the presidential pardon remain in prison. They recommended avoiding overcrowding in prisons and insisted on the release of these categories of prisoners.

Regarding the creation of communal agro-sylvo-pastoral development centers provided for in the Government's action plan but which have not yet been installed, the Prime Minister indicated that the process is underway with an achievement rate of 65%.

To protect the Uwinterekwa and Gatunguru districts which were occupied without following the rules of town planning, the Prime Minister specified that the Ministry in charge of infrastructure plans to carry out a restructuring study of these districts. A budget line has just been created for restoration work in these neighborhoods, added CPG Alain Guillaume BUNYONI. The parliamentarians wanted to know if the promotion of public and socio-economic infrastructure is possible with a high interest rate applied by the Urban Housing Promotion Fund on housing credit, the Prime Minister

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)
replied that this rate should not exceed 8% as recommended by the Bank of the Republic of Burundi.

Asked what the Government intends to do to help reduce the interest rate applied by banks to promote trade, the Prime Minister said that the Government will do its best to ensure that interest rates are reduced below 14%.

Regarding the promotion of the financial sector, the Prime Minister explained to parliamentarians that the central bank has opened a refinancing window for credit institutions and microfinance institutions that will allow them to finance clients at a lending rate of 8% at most.

Asked when the printing and distribution of educational materials to improve the quality of learning, the Prime Minister reassured parliamentarians, affirming that these educational materials of the new program are planned to be used during the year 2021-2022 schoolchildren in the 2nd year of the new program.

Asked about the accompanying measures linked to the decree on the protection of Burundian clandestine migrants, the Prime Minister indicated that a national labor migration policy is being drawn up and is at an advanced stage.

The parliamentarians asked the Prime Minister when the Government will take the decision to substitute firewood by other means of cooking to better fight against deforestation, the Prime Minister replied that sufficient electricity production is planned from December 2022 and that the price will be revised downwards so that it is accessible to all Burundians, with the aim of promoting the use of electric stoves.

CPG Alain Guillaume BUNYONI also cited the exemption from taxes already acquired for the import of gas so that the price is accessible to the Burundian population. The Prime Minister also indicated that the Government plans to import machines by the National Peat Office, for the manufacture of charred peat briquettes so that they are used in households, schools, prisons and military and police camps.

Members of the Government and other senior Officials of State institutions had taken part in the presentation ceremonies of the report on the implementation of the Government's program.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)

Burundi's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation holds fruitful diplomatic talks during his visit to New York

On Thursday 15/4/2021, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation of Burundi, His Excellency Ambassador Albert SHINGIRO met with His Excellency Mr. Antonio GUTERRES, Secretary General of the United Nations on subjects of common interest.

The two authorities underlined the imperative need to redouble efforts at the national, regional and international level in order to definitively eradicate the negative forces which still swarm in large numbers in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In an interview he had with the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations in charge of peacekeeping opera-
tions, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, His Excellency the Minister also raised the subject relating to the contribution of Burundi to peacekeeping operations, UN peace and the African Union Mission in Somalia.

At the end of his meeting with the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations in charge of peacekeeping operations, His Excellency Ambassador Albert SHINGIRO reiterated Burundi’s offer of a military battalion, police units, military officers and police to serve at the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic, the African Union Mission in Somalia and at the Headquarters.

(Source: MFADC-Newsroom)

Burundi validates new COVID-19 response plan

The Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS in collaboration with the World Health Organization as well as other technical and financial partners (PTFs), organized on Tuesday April 13, 2021 in Bujumbura, a validation workshop of the COVID-19 response plan.

WHO Representative in Burundi Dr Xavier Crispin praised the efforts of the Government to respond effectively against COVID-19, as well as the additional measures taken recently by the Government, to respond to the wave of new cases of COVID-19 in progress since the beginning of 2021. This concerns in particular the promotion of the wearing of masks, the closing of nightclubs, as well as the extension of the mass screening campaign for an additional period, he continued.

According to Dr Xavier Crispin, while the pandemic is still active and worrying in all regions of the world with the onset of a third peak and the appearance of variants, these efforts must be maintained and reinforced with particular emphasis on preventive measures.

The WHO Representative in Burundi also welcomed the inclusion of technical and financial partners in the development of the COVID-19 response plan, which he said demonstrates the recognition of the Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS of the need to provide an integrated, inclusive and participatory response to COVID-19. This also testifies to the consideration of the efforts, assets and various contributions of each other, in the implementation of response activities adapted to the realities of Burundi and to the needs of the populations, he added.

According to the Minister in charge of Public Health Dr Thaddée NDIKUMANA who opened this workshop to validate the COVID-19 response plan, since March 31, 2020, date of confirmation of 2 first cases of COVID-19 until 12th April 2021, 221,292 people were tested and among them 3,262 people were confirmed positive to COVID-19. And to point out that the overall positivity rate is 1.47%. Among the 3,262 positive cases reported, there are 616 imported cases and 2,646 cases of local transmission, explained the Minister, specifying that the cure rate is 91% and the death rate is 0.18%.

The Minister in charge of Public Health also underlined that to contain this pandemic, the country, with the support of its technical and financial partners, has implemented interventions, including the establishment of a contingency plan and response to COVID-19, which is a crucial tool for guiding and monitoring and evaluating response actions.

The plan, which has been validated, was developed for a period of 6 months with an amount of 49,659,767 USD, and is aligned with the objectives
of the WHO in relation to the directives given to the States to prepare and respond to this pandemic.

This plan, articulated in 9 pillars, constitutes a reference document for implementing the new orientations of the Government of Burundi in the response policy to COVID-19, concluded the Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS Dr. Thaddée NDIKUMANA.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)

Towards bringing justice closer to litigants

The Minister of Justice Madam Jeanine NIBIZI in the company of the Executives of this Ministry, made a working visit in Makamba province on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, to discuss and collect the concerns of the population with regard to justice in this province in order to find solutions.

In order to bring justice closer to litigants, the Minister of Justice launched in Makamba province, a campaign for forwarding files requesting review or annulment of judgments in the respective provinces, after a deep analyze. Out of 3400 files, the Minister said that 99.1% of these have been analyzed.

The Minister of Justice, in her remarks for the occasion, indicated that justice is essential in the life of the country because it is the source of peace, security and development. Madam Jeanine NIBIZI then asked the judges to work in accordance with ethics and professional deontology.

During this meeting with the population of Makamba province, the Minister of Justice also announced that the Ministry plans to organize sessions throughout the country to explain to the population how to proceed to go to court and the various formalities to be carried out.

As for the Governor of the Province of Makamba Madam Françoise NGOZIRAZANA, she welcomed the visit of the Minister of Justice and indicated that she is also delighted with the good collaboration that exists between the administration, justice and the police. She said that in Makamba province, land disputes come first among the problems facing the province, especially in the municipality of Nyanza-Lac.

The President of the Makamba Court of Appeal, for her part, indicated that the justice sector in Makamba province faces many challenges, including the lack of means of transport to arrive on the ground, insufficient staff in the courts, the resistance of the losing litigants who oppose the decisions rendered by the courts, etc.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)
As part of the popularization of the National Diaspora Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation organized regional awareness-raising workshops on the National Diaspora Policy for the Governors of the Provinces and the Communal Administrators of Burundi. These workshops are organized by region; West region (Province, Rumonge, Cibitoke, Mwaro, Bubanza, Bujumbura and Bujumbura-Mairie), Center region (Gitega, Makamba, Muramvya, Rutana, Karusi, Ruyigi, Bururi, Cankuzo,) and the North Region (Province Ngozi, Kirundo, Muyinga, Kayanza).

On Tuesday April 13, 2021, at the King’s Conference Center, the Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation Mr. Ferdinand BASHIKAKO proceeded to the solemn opening of the workshop at the level of the West region.

In his speech, Mr. Ferdinand BASHIKAKO reminded participants that since 2018 Burundi has had a strategic orientation instrument (National Development Plan of Burundi 2018-2027) whose objective is to establish priority programs of economic and social development towards the emergence of the country. He said that it is normal for sectoral implementation mechanisms to be set up in order to combine our efforts towards the expectation of tangible results. The combined efforts of all citizens both inside and outside the country are necessary. In this capacity, he announced that the role of the Diaspora in bringing this program to fruition is essential.

The Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation indicated that the Government of Burundi has already made a lot of efforts towards strengthening collaboration with the Diaspora. He cited in particular the establishment of a department in charge of the Diaspora within the Ministry having Foreign Affairs in its attributions since 2009 and the establishment of the Week dedicated to the Diaspora at the end of each month of July. He also announced that other actions aimed at facilitating the Diaspora, have been taken by the Government.

He continued by recalling that the Burundian Diaspora has already engaged in the country’s development process through multiple actions.

Mr. Ferdinand BASHIKAKO said that despite the step taken, challenges are not lacking. He cited in particular the mapping of the Burundian diaspora which is not yet available, the data on the numbers and areas of expertise of the Burundian Diaspora which are very little known, the contributions of the Diaspora which are not always recognized and which are predictable due to lack of data, etc. He indicated that it is to face these challenges that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation pleaded with the Ministry in charge of Home Affairs to involve the Burundian Diaspora in planning, implementation and evaluation of Communal Development Plans (PCDC) in order to encourage members of the Burundian Diaspora to invest in their provinces of origin.
The Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation ended his speech by indicating that this workshop was also organized to discuss together on the contribution of the Diaspora to the development of their native provinces, the role of the Administrators in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Diaspora projects, improving communication with the diaspora, involving the diaspora in local development planning, how to adopt Diaspora incentives to come and invest in the country, the way to promote the contributions of the Diaspora to municipal development.

Presentations on various topics were also planned in this workshop. These are among others: Policy of the Diaspora and its implication in the Development of the Country presented by Mr. Philibert MUREKAMBARANEZ, Senior Director having the Diaspora in his attributions; Involvement of the Diaspora in Country Development case of Mali, presented by Mrs. Mireille MUGISHA, Representative of IOM; State of play of the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the sensitization workshop at the place of Governors, held on December 12, 2019, presented by Mrs. Noémie Claire SINIREMERA, Director of the Diaspora.

After the presentations, the participants exchanged views and made recommendations. In most of the interventions, the participants showed that the prordial role of the Diaspora in the implementation of the National Development Plan of Burundi (PND 2018-2027) is important.

Closing the workshop activities, the Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, Mr. Ferdinand BASHIKAKO, warmly thanked the participants and those who contributed to the organization of these workshops which are so important to achieve the development of the country. Note that this same workshop was organized in Gitega for the central region on April 15, 2021 and in Ngozi for the North region on April 16, 2021.

(Source: MFADC-Newsroom)

The Ambassador of Burundi in the Kingdom of Netherlands carries out a raid in order to reinforce cooperation

As part of exploring investment opportunities in Burundi, the Ambassador of Burundi in the Kingdom of Netherlands Mr. Gamaliel NKURUNZIZA carried out on April 14, 2021 a raid in the company of Hendrix Genetics which is specialized in fundamental research and multi-species animal selection. The distribution and animal selection were mainly based on hens and pigs. This activity was carried out in over 50 countries.

(Source: MFADC-Newsroom)
As part of a series of descents that the Embassy of Burundi at Ankara in Turkey is organizing throughout the territory of the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi in Turkey His Excellency Gérard NTABORWAROYE BIKEBAKO paid a working visit in the South-East of Turkey, in the Province of Şanlıurfa, from April 4 to 6, 2021. This visit allowed His Excellency the Ambassador to meet the Mayor of the city of Şanlıurfa and to visit factories located in a special industrial zone of this province and discuss with their General Managers, encouraging them to come and invest in Burundi in order to intensify commercial and economic cooperation with the transfer of technology.

The visit to the Mayor of Şanlıurfa was organized with the objective of strengthening cooperation between Burundi and Turkey and collecting information about the management of the city that we can share with the cities of Burundi. He seized this opportunity to discuss with the Mayor the possibility of establishing relations of friendship and cooperation between the city of Bujumbura and that of Şanlıurfa.

(Source: Embassy of Burundi in Ankara)

Burundi will ratify the Maputo Protocol with reservations, the President of the National Assembly ruled on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. The Right Honorable Gérase Daniel NDABIRABE who was speaking on the sidelines of the presentation of the annual report, 2020 edition of the Independent National Commission for Human Rights, CNIDH in acronym, affirmed loud and clear against certain articles of the Protocol which risk to upset the customs of the country.

By way of example, he illustrated, on page 134 of the report, we can read: “At the regional level, Burundi is party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. He also subscribed to the Kampala Declaration of December 16, 2011 on sexual and gender-based violence. However, the ratification of the Protocol relating to this Charter (Maputo Protocol) is still awaited. The ratification of this Protocol will bring absolutely added value since it recognizes to women not only a wide range of human rights in general but
also the reproductive rights of women, in particular the right to safe abortion, in the event of sexual assault, rape, incest and when the pregnancy endangers the life or the mental and physical health of the mother”.

The Right Honorable Gélase Daniel NDABIRABE ordered the CNIDH to delete this paragraph altogether. Another provision to be deleted, advised the Honorable Agathon RWASA, concerns the recommendation of the CNIDH on page 139: “Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Maputo Protocol”.

According to the President of the CNIDH, Doctor Sixte Vigny Nimuraba, during the year 2020, out of a total of 304 referrals, 188 were related to civil and political rights, 33 to economic, social and cultural rights, 56 to requested services such as legal aid, humanitarian assistance, advice, guidance and advocacy, 2 to the rights of the child, 1 to the right to a healthy environment and 24 to purely civil cases and ordinary criminal cases not falling within the competence of the CNIDH. For the latter category, the Commission invited the applicants to apply to the competent courts and public prosecutors.

Of the 304 referrals and self-referrals, he detailed, 257 were deemed admissible (84.5%) against 47 deemed inadmissible (15.4%). 184 were closed (60.3%) against 120 others in progress (or 39.4%). These are complex and are still being monitored, he said before welcoming some progress made during prison visits. These include, he said, improving the keeping of prison records and compliance with the legal period of custody in general. Indeed, he explained, out of a total of 5,016 detainees, only 105 were overdue.

At a time when the CNIDH wants the multiplication of branches, it has been clear that their importance is controversial. On the other hand, many Deputies considered this wish useless, like those of the Public Service where the agents are idle, while a certain number would like them to be rather established everywhere, even on the hills since, they have advanced, it is at the grassroots level that human rights are most violated.

The President of the CNIDH also made a point. We should not confuse, he clarified, violations of human rights with violations of common rights. While recalling that the 2020 elections took place in a peaceful climate despite some clashes here and there among members of competing political parties, Dr Sixte Vigny NIMURABA declared that such clashes are accused of violations of common rights, as he clarified before complimenting the imprisonment of certain perpetrators of these crimes. (Source: www.assemblee.bi)

The CNIDH receives a donation of equipment

The Independent National Commission for Human Rights (CNIDH), received on Tuesday April 13, 2021 a donation consisting of two vehicles and computer equipment, offered by the German cooperation “GIZ”. The delivery of these vehicles was made by the German Ambassador to Burundi in the presence of the Head of Office of GIZ in Burundi, Mrs. Annette Paschen.

According to the German Ambassador to Burundi, HE Dieter Reinl, these vehicles and computer equip-
ment will allow the CNIDH to accomplish its mission of promoting and protecting human rights, within the framework of the commitments made by the Burundian Government.

The delivery of these vehicles and IT equipment is in line with the capacity building and independence of the CNIDH. For the German Ambassador to Burundi, the independence of a commission like the CNIDH can be compromised due to a lack or insufficiency of resources.

The German Ambassador to Burundi, HE Dieter Reinl hopes that the vehicles offered by GIZ will allow CNIDH members to move more easily for the benefit of the people concerned, to visit prisons, attend legal proceedings or intervene spontaneously in any emergency related to human rights.

The President of the CNIDH, Dr. Sixte Vigny NIMURABA thanks the German cooperation for this support in vehicles and computer equipment. The vehicles will help the commission to face the terrain where the presence and action of the CNIDH are required because the work of the CNIDH is not always done in the office. Field trips are numerous and unavoidable, particularly with regard to monitoring human rights violations, visiting dungeons and prisons as well as organizing judicial itineraries.

As for the computer equipment, it will facilitate the work of processing, storage and transfer of data, using information and communication technologies, said Sixte Vigny NIMURABA, President of the CNIDH.

The total value of vehicles, computer and office equipment offered by GIZ to CNIDH is approximately estimated at 50,000 euros.

(Source: www.rtnb.bi)