

# Kagera RC calls on youth to venture on coffee production

From MEDDY MULISA in Bukoba

KAGERA Regional Commissioner (RC), Maj Gen Charles Mbuge, has called upon youth to engage in coffee farming as a way of creating their own employment instead of moving around with certificates searching for white collar jobs.

Maj Gen Mbuge made the appeal here when launching the Five-Year Sustainable Rejuvenation of Robusta Coffee Production Project which is implemented with funding from Café Africa (T).

The RC commended the Café Africa (T) for supporting the government's efforts in improving coffee industry, appealing to other Non-governmental organisations to do the same.

The project is aimed at increasing coffee production and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

"The government appreciates the support by Café Africa (T) in improving the production and productivity of coffee industry. Youths should take a holistic role in engaging themselves in coffee production to avoid dependence on elderly people," he said.

Maj Gen Mbuge also tasked authorities in the eight district councils of Biharamulo, Muleba,

Bukoba DC, Karagwe, Ngara, Kyerwa, Bukoba MC and Misenyi to ensure that they allocate enough land to the youths for production purposes.

Café Africa (T) Executive Secretary, Ms Dafrosa Sanga informed him that under the five-year programme (2020-2024) at least 22,250 farmers would be reached while 445 extension officers would be getting training on modern coffee husbandry practices.

At least 250 demonstration farms would be established to enable the farmers to get best agricultural practices. To-date several coffee nurseries have already been established at Birabo (Muleba) and Ibrwera (Bukoba DC).

"In collaboration with researchers at TACRI Maruku we have identified Clonal Robusta varieties which are resistant to Coffee Wilt Disease (CWD). Under the programme, we expect to produce over 600,000 Clonal Robusta varieties which would be distributed to the farmers for planting," she said.

In a message sent through video conference, Café Africa (T) National Coordinator, Ms Nadia Hourau, on behalf of the donor (JDE-Holland), assured the government of continued support to improve coffee industry.

"We congratulate President Samia Suluhu Hassan for being sworn-in to the highest office. Café Africa (T) would also like to see more women and youths taking a big role in the production of coffee to increase the incomes at their households," she said.

Zonal Coffee Manager at TACRI Maruku, Dr Nyabisi Ng'homa mentioned three major coffee diseases affecting the Robusta varieties as Coffee Wilt Disease (CWD), Leaf Rust and Black Coffee Borer.

However, he said efforts were being taken by researchers to get best Robusta varieties which were resistant to the diseases, appealing for more funds.

Kagera Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) Professor Faustine Kamuzora revealed that the region was implementing a five-year program aimed to increase production of coffee from 78,000 metric tonnes to 200,000 metric tonnes by 2025.

He appealed to all stakeholders in the coffee industry to embrace teamwork and jointly solve challenges facing the coffee sector.

According to Prof Kamuzora, Kagera region produces between 45 and 55 percent of all coffee produced in the country.

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