Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Education

WFP
World Food Programme

PRESS RELEASE

RWANDA TO LAUNCH SCHOOL FEEDING WEEK IN CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN DAY OF SCHOOL FEEDING

KIGALI, 25th February 2022 – The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) will launch a School Feeding week from 28th February to 3rd March in celebration of the 7th edition of African Day of School Feeding. This year's theme is **"Nutrition and human capital development in Africa through increased investment in home-grown school feeding"**. The launch will take place on 28th February 2022 at GS Ayabaraya, a school located in Masaka Sector, Kicukiro District, while the closing celebration will be held on 3rd March 2022 at GS Kiyonza, Ngoma sector in Nyaruguru District.

The African Day of School Feeding (ADSF) was instituted in January 2016 through a Decision Assembly of the African Union. African countries now celebrate ADSF each year to acknowledge the positive impact school meals can have on development. The national-level ADSF celebration also aims at raising awareness and stakeholder engagement to enhance Rwanda's National School Feeding Program (NSFP), which was scaled up to reach all school children in basic education in Rwanda since October 2021. School feeding has extensive impacts on child health, nutrition, academic performance, and on future employment opportunities – and can be a powerful vehicle to sustainably build Rwanda's human capital.

"As we celebrate the seventh anniversary of ADSF, the Government of Rwanda has made quality education a priority and the implementation of the NSFP is considered as one of the key interventions to make this happen. Within the program's current framework, the government contributes 40% of the total cost of the meal while parents are encouraged to support the remaining 60% and has constructed and equipped 2,648 kitchens with appropriate materials to enhance school feeding related infrastructures," said Hon. Gaspard TWAGIRAYEZU, the Minister of State in charge of Primary and Secondary Education.

In addition to financial contributions and infrastructure, school feeding operational guidelines have been developed, approved, and disseminated in 2021, establishing a system of guidance, management, and coordination for school feeding at all administrative levels of the Government.

In tandem with the NSFP, WFP provides daily nutritious school meals to 117,000 students in 136 schools in Rwanda through its Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSF) in partnership with MINEDUC and others. This programme provides health and nutrition support in schools and builds the capacity of local farmers to grow and supply food for school feeding. The programme also creates a space for learning and capacity building which supports the development and expansion of the NSFP.

"On behalf of all school feeding partners in Rwanda, we wish to commend the Rwandan Government for its commitment to scaling up school feeding to all school children through its NSFP. This was done during a particularly challenging time presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. School feeding can be a game changer for building the future of Rwanda by supporting human capital development and creating a powerful platform to build sustainable food systems," said Edith Heines, WFP Rwanda Representative and Country Director. "WFP with partners, has been supporting implementation of school feeding in Rwanda since 2002. We and other partners pledge our commitment to continue supporting the Government of Rwanda throughout this journey," Heines further added.

Locally sourced food procurement is also encouraged within the current framework of the NSFP to support the farmer cooperatives, the national economy, local food production and to help fight malnutrition. According to a 2017 study, every US$1 invested in school feeding in Rwanda brings an economic return of US$4.80 from improved productivity, health, nutrition, and education.

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