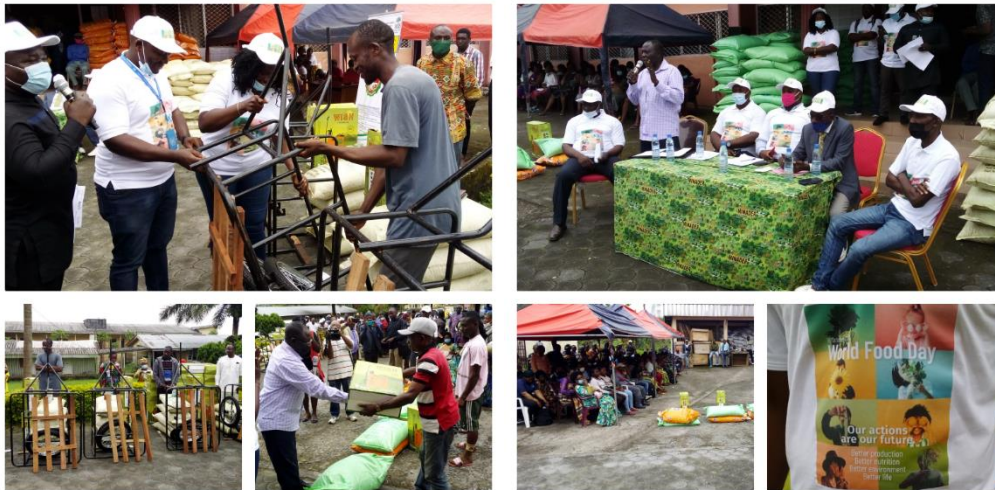


AIVDP Joins Celebration for 2021 World Food Day

Friday 15th October 2021 remained a day of festivities as farmers congregated at the Regional Delegation of Agriculture, Buea to celebrate World Food Day.

The event with the theme ‘Our Actions, Are Our Future, Better Production, Better Nutrition, A Better Life’ saw the convergence of prominent institutions such as the South West Development Authority (SOWEDA) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Agricultural Infrastructural Value Chain Development Chain Project (AIVDP) demonstrating support for farmers of the South West Region.



Unfortunately, Cameroonians are no strangers to the challenges that have plagued the agricultural sector and her most vulnerable in the country. To name a few; high poverty and unemployment rates, lack of access to, poor rural infrastructure particularly feeder roads network, deficit in health and education coverage and insufficient access to rural finance. The key is to remind all concerned to take action where need be and that regardless of these challenges, development is achievable.

By decision No. 0972/MINADER/CP 16th of September 2016 of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, The Agricultural Infrastructure and Value Chain Development Project created within the South West Development Authority. The Project, which is often referred to as a second phase of the African Development Bank RUMPI area participatory development Project, which executed from 2005 to 2012, is in effect a post development Project currently implemented within the six divisions of the South West Region.

The interventions of the Project, which is concentrated in the production basins along the principal road corridors, covers a total surface area of about 14,500 Km² with a population of about 1.5 million inhabitants touching about 600 communities out of the 960 in the South West Region. There is an active youth population representing about 60% and 52% of the population are women.

The Project's overall goal is to contribute to inclusive growth through enhanced agricultural productivity and value chain development with various development objectives namely a.) Increase income of small holders and agricultural service provider's b.) Improve access to basic social/public infrastructure and services (water and sanitation, basic education and basic health) c.) Facilitate the development of rural enterprises and institutions involved in the crop value chain and d.) Enhance the capacity (operational and institutional) of small holder farmers and cooperatives in undertaking rural development projects.

Improving on the inputs and outputs delivery system of agricultural production through the construction of rehabilitation of agricultural service roads is key in linking the agricultural production basins and villages to the main road corridors. The latter is why AIVDP is the process of constructing 70 km and rehabilitation of 220 km of agricultural service roads.

In aiding farmers improve agricultural outputs, increase production, and ensure food security AIVDP has distributed improved planting materials including two hundred thirty thousand (230,000) pre germinated chitted nuts, two million two hundred fifty eight thousand (2,258,000) cassava cuttings, fifteen thousand one hundred and forty (15,140) coco pods ninety three thousand eight hundred ninety (93,890) plantain plantlets, nine thousand two hundred twenty nine (9,229) budded citrus, fifteen kilo grams (15 kg) potato seeds, two thousand kilo grams (2,000 kg) rice. Such high yielding seeds will serve in increasing the quantity of crops for farmers with shorter cultivation periods thus increasing profitability. As part of increasing crop production of irish potatoes, the construction of an irrigation system will take place in Nkongle.

AIVDP has also launched tenders for the provision of oil palm and cassava processing units, the construction of 55 cocoa greenhouse dryers and fermentation structures and oil presses-equipment's necessary to spur production in value chain crops to improve livelihoods of rural communities.

Recognizing the significant role, access to basic health care and clean drinking water play in the development of rural areas and the lives of rural communities, AIVDP will facilitate the construction of seven (7) Health Centers and of fifty (50) Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) where work is currently ongoing. AIVDP also is also promoting the protection of fifty (50) water catchment areas as well as constructing / rehabilitating thirty - two (32) potable water supply schemes.

In improving the current state of available rural markets and constructing market hangars, the Project is playing a key role in increasing commerce opportunities for farmers. Not only will the presence of such structures, offer adequate comfort and safety for farmer goods, but it will serve as a major contributor towards the reduction of post-harvest losses. To date AIVDP has

awarded contracts for the construction of 14 permanent rural markets and 30 permanent farm gate hangars with most close to completion and some already completed.

Given that microfinance sector plays a vital role in poverty reduction and in boosting agricultural production, AIVDP will assist farmers by providing them with financial resources and technical assistance through the creation of a line of microfinance (US\$ 3.5 million CFA), establish 30 village banks, provide support to 55 existing village banks and strengthen the managerial and financial capacity of the existing village banks as well as the umbrella network organization of village banks (South West Association of Village Banks - SWAVIB).

Education will continue to transcend schools and envelop various actors in communities from small holder farmers, cooperatives to village institutions in the form of capacity building. Such actors must undergo a process of change to develop and adjust their capacities to accommodate new circumstances. Thus, capacity building is a necessity as it accompanies provision of infrastructures which would become obsolete without an adequately equipped population to oversee their use. The Project aims to build the capabilities of such actors by organizing over 200 training workshops in the domains of processing and marketing, sensitization and advocacy activities to ensure community and stakeholder participation. In line with its objectives, AIVDP has organized various capacity building workshops and sensitization activities for community actors/beneficiaries consisting of over 2960 males 2346 females and 1,152 youths. To the same effect construction is underway for ten (10) double classroom blocks, and seven (7) multi-purpose community empowerment centers.

With all the Project aims to deliver, AIVDP remains cognisant of all current and prospective environmental impacts which could be attributed as a result of Project activities. Therefore, AIVDP has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MINEPDED in an effort to mitigate any environmental impacts caused throughout the Project's duration.

Through the stated interventions, AIVDP will continue taking action in addressing issues of poverty, hunger & malnutrition in South West Region by securing better production, nutrition and better livelihoods for rural communities.

