

Burundi receives \$40 million IDA grant for development

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The Burundian government has received US\$40 million (over R291 million) to improve accountability and governance at the local level through intensive capacity building and rebuilding social cohesion in the country.

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors Wednesday approved an International Development Association (IDA) grant of to support the community and social development project known as Pradecs.

Pradecs objective is to establish and operationalise a decentralised, participatory, and transparent financing mechanism that empowers local government and communities to provide better and equitable local service delivery.

According to the project task team leader, Valerie Layrol, the project will achieve its objective through community empowerment, capacity building, investments in socio-economic projects, and social cohesion activities.

She said Pradecs comes at a critical time for the country because socio-economic services deliveries have been greatly weakened in the past decade due to civil war.

"This project is a key instrument to support economic and social recovery in the country and rebuild social capital. Given its extensive involvement in Community Driven Development (CDD) in other post-conflict settings, World Bank has a clear comparative advantage in this area.

"...CDD has translated into the achievement of quick and tangible results on the ground when communes are given the financial resources to undertake activities that respond to their own priorities. Rebuilding social capital has a sustainable and positive impact, both directly on community well-being and instrumentally on building long-term peace," said Ms Layrol.

The proposed project is a key element of the Interim Strategy Note (ISN) and supports three of the four pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which includes: improving governance and security, promoting sustainable equitable growth and developing human capital.

"It will support the achievement of the first objective of the ISN by increasing communities' access to basic services as well as enhancing social stability," she said.

Pradecs will improve the livelihoods of communities and therefore will contribute to five Millennium Development Goals which are to:

- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieve universal primary education;
- reduce child mortality;
- improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS; and
- combat malaria and other diseases.

Pradecs will cover the 16 rural provinces, but it will not be implemented everywhere with the same intensity.

Strong support will be provided to the eight provinces of Bubanza, Cankuzo, Kirundo, Makamba, Muramvya, Muyinga, Mwaro and Ngozi.

Light support will be provided to the other eight provinces, Bujumbura rural, Bururi, Karuzi, Gitega, Kayanza, Cibitoke, Ruyigi, Rutana in which other projects are already giving similar support.

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