

Seedlings for Rwanda

Change begins with Knowledge



The word “broadcast” means “to scatter seeds.” With these programs, you can plant seedlings throughout your daily broadcast to become a Green Station. Seedlings are short pieces about climate change that can include facts, simple solutions, nature poems, songs, and listener ideas.

1. This is Seedlings.

In Kigali, the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum is currently underway, where eleven countries are discussing the effects of El Nino and strategies to adapt to climate change. Participating countries include drought-stricken Ethiopia and Sudan, both of which had to appeal for international aid when failed crops lead to huge food shortages. El Nino has led to unpredictable and extreme weather, as in South Sudan, where the country suffered drought in the north and but battled flooding in the south. El Nino is a weather pattern that happens irregularly every few years, and is made more extreme by climate change. Ocean water off the coast of South America gets warmer, leading to unpredictable changes in rain and temperature as far away as Africa. Anthony Twahirwa, the head of weather and climate service at Rwanda Meteorology Agency, will speak at the conference about people killed by extreme weather, roads and bridges damaged by heavy rains, wind, and landslides, as well as the homes, livestock and crops lost. The effects of El Nino are expected to subside by May.



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2. This is Seedlings.

The Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa has given the government a 6.3 million RWF grant to build green mini-grids to supply power to rural villages. Green mini-grids are small power stations that can run on solar, wind, or hydropower and power up to 250 households. Mini-grids are designed to get electricity to people who live too far away to use the national grid system, but who live close enough to other people to make it more efficient to build a mini-grid than to power households individually. The Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa hopes that this grant will bring power to 145,000 households over the next two years. At the moment, only 5% of rural Rwandan households have access to electricity, and this is a good first step toward making electricity available to everyone, government's goal for the year 2030. The government hopes that if the mini-grid project is successful, it will encourage international investment in green energy in Rwanda.



3. This is Seedlings.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is a Nigerian economist and former Finance Minister of Nigeria and Managing Director at the World Bank. She now serves as Governing Board Chair of the African Risk Capacity, an agency of the African Union that provides insurance to countries suffering from extreme weather and climate change. As part of her job, she sees the damage that climate change is doing to Africa and the huge human and economic toll African Union countries are facing. In an interview with CNBC Africa, she said, "As we see increasing volatile changes in weather patterns, floods and droughts and climate change impact, we've seen a lot of loss of lives and livelihoods, livestock, farmers losing everything." When asked how climate change is likely to impact Africa in the future, Okonjo-Iweala told her interviewer, "I think the risk is significant for Africa. We did not cause most of the things leading to climate change, [like the] the carbon emissions in the atmosphere. The need for a carbon-free environment is now evident to everybody and we have to be part of it [...]. This is affecting some of the people who are the poorest in our population."



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4. This is Seedlings.

Here is a poem about rain by Alice Oswald, titled, "Vertigo."

May I shuffle forward and tell you the two minute life of rain

Starting right now lips open and lidless-cold all-seeing gaze

When something not yet anything changes its mind like me

And begins to fall

In the small hours

And the light is still a flying carpet

Only a little white between worlds like an eye opening after an operation

No turning back
each drop is a snap decision

A suicide from the tower-block of heaven

And for the next ten seconds
The rain stares at the ground

Sees me stirring here
As if sculpted in porridge

Sees the garden in the green of its mind already drinking

And the grass lengthening

Stalls ...

Maybe a thousand feet above me
A kind of yellowness or levity
Like those tiny alterations that brush the legs of swimmers
Lifts the rain a little to the left

No more than a flash of free-will
Until the clouds close their options and the whole melancholy air surrenders to pure fear and ... falls

And I who live in the basement
One level down from the world
With my eyes to the insects and my ears to the roots listening

I feel them in my bones these dead straight lines
Coming closer and closer to my core

This is the sound this is the very floor
Where Grief and his Wife are living looking up



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