

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Agriculture and rural problems are very important topics in African studies. Agriculture is the most important economic sector in many African countries, and a great part of the African population live in rural areas. Moreover, as even city dwellers generally keep a strong personal and material linkage with rural areas, understanding agriculture and the rural society is crucial for African studies. This is the reason why Africanists have tackled the problem of agriculture and rural society in many academic fields.

This report focuses on agriculture and rural problems in Rwanda. Needless to say, this topic has special importance in Rwanda, where more than 90 % of the total population can be found in rural areas. Studies on this topic have great significance in the present context, as this is the central problem to tackle for reconstructing the country. The civil war between 1990 and 1994 caused enormous damage to Rwanda. In particular, the massacre and genocide in 1994 destroyed the country and caused serious shock all over the world. Although there must be many factors in the tragedy, degradation of the rural economy was undoubtedly one of the most important reasons to intensify the violence. Economic crises in rural areas increased the social tension, thus causing the participation of ordinary peasants in the massacre. The reconstruction of agriculture and rural areas is thus crucial for the stable future of this country.

According to this perspective, Jean Marara (Institut de Recherche Scientifique et Technologie, Université Nationale de Rwanda) and Shin'ichi Takeuchi (Institute of Developing Economies) carried out in 1999 a joint-research project entitled "Rwandan Reconstruction and the Rural Area" funded by Institute of Developing Economies. In this project, the policy for agriculture and rural development, as well as the peasant's agricultural management were mainly studied. This is a preliminary report of the result. Considering that information about Rwandan agriculture and its rural areas after the civil war is scarce, we will try in this report to present the data rather than to analyze them. This report could therefore be regarded as providing material for future analysis.

This report is composed of four chapters. Chapter I at first abstracts the characteristics of Rwandan agriculture and its rural area from recent studies and statistics. Recent macro-economic statistics, development programs and agricultural censuses will be presented. This chapter will provide the basic knowledge for the subsequent discussions. We next discuss the agricultural and rural policies so far implemented in Rwanda in Chapter II. These policies will be analyzed from the colonial period to the

present. Chapter III presents some data from our survey concerning agricultural management and the rural life standard. The survey on agricultural management was concerned with about 200 rural households. In order to supplement this data, we will show in Chapter IV some personal profiles of the peasants who collaborated in our research. At the last part of this report, an appendix regarding recent policy of the Rwandan government for agriculture and rural areas is added in French text. Chapters I and II and Summary and Conclusion were written by Takeuchi, while Marara wrote Chapters III and IV and Appendix.

*

We want to express our great thanks to Dr. Jean-Bosco Butera, Vice-Rector of National University of Rwanda, Dr. Jean-Bosco Gashagaza Mukwaya, former Dean of Faculty of Agriculture, and Dr. C. Karangwa, Director of IRST. Their help, suggestions and collaboration have been indispensable for the accomplishment of this research project. We also deeply thank the Rwandan peasants, who kindly answered a good number of questions and accompanied us patiently while measuring their fields. This research project was funded by the Institute of Developing Economies. In addition, thanks to the international academic research project of Ministry of Education in Japan (Monbusho), entitled "Vulnerability of African Peasants and Their Society" (Representative: Professor Shuhei Shimada of Kyoto University), Takeuchi could visit Rwanda in June 1999.

March 2000
Shin'ichi Takeuchi