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**Universal Periodic Review**

## **Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review\***

### **Rwanda**

#### **Addendum**

#### **Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review**

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\* The present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

## **Rwanda National UPR report: Supplementary information**

This paper contains clarifications on key issues that were raised during the Rwandan review under UPR, in January 2011, and on the Working Group's recommendations that were rejected by the Rwandan Government. It also highlights reforms under way in Rwanda in relation to human rights promotion and other achievements that were not specified in the national UPR report.

### **I. Reforms under way in relation to human rights promotion**

#### **A. Freedom of association and political rights**

1. The law governing political parties is under review. The draft new law provides that the registration of political parties will be made by an independent institution, the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), as a substitute to the Ministry of Local Government.
2. RGB will also deal with the registration of local NGO's and Faith Based Organizations.
3. Regarding the law governing International NGO's, its review is already on the level of the Senate. The planned changes include the annual registration that will be replaced by a registration valid for five renewable years.
4. It's worth underlining that national NGO's that requested and obtained a permanent legal status don't need renewing their registration.

#### **B. Freedom of expression and access to information**

5. The reforms under way include the following:
  - The Access to Information bill will soon enter into force to facilitate the access to information, especially among government institutions;
  - The Government of Rwanda decided to step aside from media regulation and requested media practitioners to self-regulate;
  - The Media High Council will retain only the responsibility of promoting media development and freedom;
  - The media law is being revised to suit international standards in decriminalizing defamation, determining prerequisites to become a journalist; etc.;
  - Modifying the *Office Rwandais d'Information* (ORINFOR) from a State owned institution into a public Broadcasting Agency.

### **II. Government's position on recommendations that needed further consultations**

6. All recommendations related to the fields under reforms (recommendations number 55; 56; 57; 59; 60; 61; 62; 63; 64, 65; 66; 67; 68) are in the process of being achieved. In relation to insinuations contained in some recommendations: intimidations, harassments, threats and aggressions against journalists, it has to be recalled that the real situation

prevailing in Rwanda is often distorted or exaggerated by some organizations whose biased positions on Rwanda are known.

7. Among the 16 recommendations that needed further consultations, 13 recommendations were accepted, but 3 recommendations were rejected:

**A. Recommendation no 58: Urgently investigate cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, including those which may constitute enforced disappearances (Sweden)**

8. Investigations that were conducted revealed that there are a few cases of irregular arrests and detentions which are corrected and responsible officials are punished in accordance with the law.

9. Rwanda used to have cases of beggars and street children who happened to be taken from streets to the transit centre of Gikondo (in Kigali City) where they were sensitized and encouraged to join cooperatives or existing child rehabilitation centres. But it would be erroneous to assimilate those cases to arbitrary arrests and detentions.

10. To prevent small children from vulnerable families to become street children, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is implementing a project to provide proper welfare to children below six who are HIV infected, orphaned and vulnerable. Eight Childhood Development Centres (ECD) have already been put in place in the Northern Province, which host 140 children (78 girls and 62 boys).

11. The Government of Rwanda established Iwawa vocational centre (based at Iwawa Island in the Western Province) where former young street children (who are more than 18 years old) are taught various professional skills like commercial farming, construction, carpentry, tailoring, among others. On 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2011, a total number of 752 young men graduated from the centre. Iwawa Centre still has 1,617 students of whom 580 are still undergoing rehabilitation while 1,057 are undergoing skills training.

12. Thousands of street vendors and prostitutes were taken from streets and were sensitized to organize themselves in income generating cooperatives. Some of the cooperatives are specialized in the making of the famous *peace baskets* (*agaseke*) which are gaining more and more markets all over the World; other women cooperatives provide cleaning services; others are organized vendors of fruits and vegetables, etc.

**B. Recommendation no 69: Adopt concrete measures to avoid discrimination and protect the rights of the peoples of the Batwa community and other minorities as well as request technical assistance from the United Nations to identify their basic social needs (Spain)**

13. The Rwandan Government is committed to the prevention and the fight against all forms of discrimination: the Government of Rwanda has put in place legal, administrative and institutional measures to combat discrimination. Various programs on social protection benefit to all the vulnerable groups, including the Batwa population. They receive free health insurance; adequate houses were constructed to them; they benefit from other programs such as “Free 9 Years Basic Education”; “one cow per poor family; Vision 2020 Umurenge (VUP); free legal aid, etc. And all this is done to all vulnerable and marginalized people, without any distinction.

14. The Special Rapporteur on minorities, Mrs McDougall, travelled around the country early February 2011 and assessed the rights enjoyed by the Batwa population and other

marginalized groups. The Government of Rwanda hopes that her report will explain more on the situation of the Batwa population and other minorities.

**C. Recommendation no 70: Further ensure that the country's religious minorities are able to freely practice their respective beliefs (USA)**

15. Nearly 400 registered religious groups are operating in Rwanda and many others which are not yet registered. Religious groups in Rwanda vibrantly practice their faith day and night, on streets, on markets, in public transports, in schools, at work place, at home, in churches and mosques. Five radio stations belonging to Rwandan religious groups (*Amazing Grace, Restore hope, Radio Maria Rwanda, Umucyo Radio and Voice of Africa*) ceaselessly air preaching, prayers, religious songs and worships.

16. When religious groups contravene established laws, they have to respond for it before competent institutions. It happens that some religious groups recommend their members not to practice community works (umuganda); not to use the national currency; not to respect the national flag; not to seek medical treatments; children are sometimes encouraged to leave schools (because Jesus is soon coming); etc. The Government of Rwanda ensures order in religious groups to avoid similar situations. The law governing religious groups, prepared with the participation of religious leaders, was already adopted by both Chambers of the Parliament.

**III. Clarifications on recommendations that were rejected during the Rwandan review before the UPR Working Group**

**A. Recommendation no 71: ensure that children under the age of 18 were not recruited into any armed group on the national territory (Slovenia); Prohibit child recruitment into Local defence Forces or into any armed group (Hungary)**

17. It has to be underlined that there are no armed groups on the Rwandan territory. Rwanda has a professional army and a professional police force, whose contributions to peace keeping in various countries (especially in Sudan and in Haiti) are praised by everybody. But Rwanda has also a Local defence Force which has been trained to maintain security among the population. Laws governing the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), the Rwanda National Police (RNP) and the Local Defence Force (LDF) are very clear: no one can be recruited to join any of the three forces before attaining 18 years.

18. Rwanda used to have children soldiers, during the 1990-1994 liberation war. But all those children were demobilised and integrated in schools and rehabilitation centres. Many of them have now graduated from universities.

19. It has to be reminded also that the so called *Forces Démocratiques de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR)*, who are active in some neighbouring countries (not inside Rwanda); do recruit children from Rwandan refugees held by those negative forces. But the Rwandan Government, through the Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, conduct intense sensitizations urging rebels with clean hands to differentiate themselves from those who committed genocide. A number of ex rebels, including children, have been repatriated and integrated in the Rwandan society.

**B. Recommendation no 72: take concrete measures in addressing the problem of human trafficking including by tackling the root causes, introducing effective prevention measures, timely prosecution and punishment of traffickers and providing protection and support to victims (Malaysia)**

20. There is no problem of human trafficking in Rwanda. But preventive measures exist: Rwanda is party to all international Conventions on human trafficking and Rwanda adopted laws against human trafficking. Rwanda is a secure and organized country, from the capital city to remote villages. Apart from the very effective security forces (RDF, RNP and LDF), there are other mechanisms that allow citizens to maintain their security, especially the Community Policing. Issues related to security and to the protection of women and children are among key topics that are often discussed by villagers after the monthly community works (Umuganda). People can't be trafficked unknowingly from Rwanda or through Rwanda.

**C. Recommendation no 73: intensify measures to improve access of minority groups and indigenous people to basic social services such as health, education, employment and occupation (Malaysia)**

21. The response was provided in point II 2: policies and programs on social protection don't exclude any Rwandan. Programs like Community Based Health Insurance; 9Years Basic Education; One cow per poor family; *Vision 2020/ Umurenge*; *Bye bye Nyakatsi* (eradication of grass thatched houses) and institutions like Work Development Authority (WDA), were put in place to improve lives of all the needy population without any discrimination. On the other hand, Rwanda has vulnerable and marginalized groups but no indigenous people have been identified in Rwanda. It is not yet scientifically proven which group was the first to settle in Rwanda. What is scientifically proven is that all Rwandans belong to one ethnic group: they speak one language, share one culture and a common destiny.

**IV. Progress in the implementation of voluntary pledges**

**A. The program One cow per poor family**

22. More and more Rwandans are voluntarily contributing to the donation of cows to support the national program *One cow per poor family*, aimed at improving the nutrition, but also increasing the earnings of beneficiaries from milk, milk products, meat and sale of manure. 108,825 cows have been distributed to poor families while 42,750 cows (belonging to poor families) have been artificially inseminated in an effort to modernise livestock.

**B. Adequate houses to all vulnerable and marginalized people**

23. The program to eradicate the 124,671 grass thatched houses, which started in 2009, has already attained the level of 86%. But the promotion of adequate housing will be extended to the upgrading of all inadequate houses and to the promotion of hygiene and sanitation.

24. In Rwanda, 98% of households have latrines while 58% have access to clean sanitation facilities and 80% have access to clean water. The Rwandan Government is using

a community-based approach to reach the target of 100% improved sanitation coverage countrywide by 2012.

25. Because of existing laudable efforts for the promotion of adequate housing, as well as hygiene and sanitation, Rwanda was elected Chair of the UN-Habitat and will host the third African Sanitation and Hygiene conference (AfricaSan 3) in July 2011.

26. The Government of Rwanda has extended an official invitation to the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing.

### **C. Universal health insurance**

27. Currently, 91% population has adhered to community based health insurance (mutuelle de santé). Another main health insurance scheme in Rwanda “La Rwandaise d’Assurance Maladie or RAMA” plans to extend health insurance to its retired members and to the members’ parents.

### **D. Legal aid to all vulnerable and marginalized people**

28. The legal aid services are more and more provided to the Rwandan population. Apart from the Access to Justice Bureaus, operational in all 30 districts of the country, over 1370 paralegals operating under various NGO’s (regrouped in the Legal Aid Forum) have helped the population to access legal services across the country.

## **V. Other key information that were not highlighted in the national UPR report**

### **A. The health sector**

29. Rwanda is among the rare African countries which have met the target fixed in Abuja declaration on health to spend at least 15% of the national budget on health. This year’s health budget is 15% and 17% when external support is included.

30. Rwanda was among the first African countries to launch pneumococcal vaccines (last year) and to start (in April 2011) the comprehensive integrated cervical cancer prevention programme for young girls aged between 11 and 15, with the introduction against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and early cancer diagnostic for women aged between 35 and 45.

31. In the fight against malaria, comparing data from 2003 to 2010, malaria incidence has declined by 70%, malaria cases have decreased by 60% while malaria deaths have declined by 54%. Today, Rwanda has achieved universal coverage of Long Lasting Insecticide Nets (LLINs) with all households having at least two.

32. Regarding anti HIV/AIDS program, over 90,000 patients are under treatment (80% of expected patients), while 80% pregnant women are covered with PMTCT services, and some 77% infected children receive ART services. Also, a widespread Male circumcision program is being implemented.

33. The Partnership for Maternal, New born and Child Health (PMNCH) ranked Rwanda top in the Eastern Africa in the fight against child mortality and maternal deaths. Child mortality was reduced from 152/1,000 live births to 103/1,000 live births from 2005 to 2008, but the on-going DHS will provide more accurate figures.

34. Rwanda is also indicated in a new study by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank as having one of the largest declines in maternal mortality with a reduction on maternal deaths from 750/100,000 live births in 2005 to 383/100,000 live births (51%) between 2005 and 2008.

35. Because of the strong Government commitment to improve quality of care and service delivery in Rwandan hospitals, the Kigali King Faisal Hospital recently received a two year accreditation status from the Council for Health Services Accreditation of South Africa (COHSASA). The hospital scored 99 percent in the final results and became the first government-owned hospital in the region to achieve an internationally recognized status.

36. Regarding the human resources for health, the ratio doctors/population improved from 1/50,000 in 2005, to 1/17,000 in 2010. For Nurses, the figure improved from 1/3,300 to 1/1,700.

37. All those high impact interventions have resulted in an impressive 95% health care utilization in 2010.

## **B. Education sector**

38. Rwanda is close to reaching universal education: today primary school enrolment stands at 94% boys and 96.5% for girls. Secondary education is also nearly universal, with rates of about 89% for boys and 92% for boys in 2009. Primary completion has climbed from 52% in 2007 to 76% in 2010. The qualified teacher–student ratio is targeted to fall from its present level of 63 to 47 by 2015.

39. The national illiteracy rate was reduced from 50% to 25% between 2000 and 2008. The Government has started a new program to pair senior students with illiterate members of their communities. The campaign will involve more than 8,600 youths who will give their time on a voluntary basis. The Government has set a target of having 85% of men and 80% of women literate by 2011. Achieving this would mean that Rwanda would be in line to meet the Millennium Development Goal of cutting the illiteracy rate by half by 2015.

## **C. Agriculture and environment protection**

40. The country's priorities are the crop intensification, irrigation, improving post-harvest activities, livestock improvement and export promotion. The current construction of Muvumba Irrigation Schemes alone will yield 21,000 tons of rice. The construction of storage facilities in all major crop intensification program areas is underway. 87% of all arable land in Rwanda is sustainably managed against soil erosion, mainly through terracing.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Rwandan Government's achievements in the promotion of human rights are quite commendable. However, there is no doubt that the UPR process will help Rwanda to identify existing gaps to be tackled. Rwanda welcomes the recommendations from the Human Rights Council.

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