

**REPORT
OF THE**



**NATIONAL COUNCIL WOMEN CAUCUS EXCHANGE
PROGRAMMETO THE PARLIAMENT OF RWANDA
FROM
23 – 29 SEPTEMBER 2017**

November 2018

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Strategies and formulas used within political parties to ensure women representation in all structures of government and parliament;
2. Legislation and policies that guide political parties in selecting their representatives to decision-making bodies;
3. Quota system used and the application thereof;
4. Policies in place, to empower women in different level of life, including access to finance, employment, human rights, education and medical services; exchanging ideas on exercising oversight functions over the Executive; and
5. Exchanging ideas on how to strengthen the operation of the Women Caucus.

MEMBER DELEGATION

1. Honourable Hilma Nicanor – Vice Chairperson and Leader of the Delegation
2. Honourable Lonia Kaishungu
3. Honourable Victoria Kauma
4. Honourable Laina Mekundi

1. BACKGROUND

The National Council Women Caucus among others, has a mandate to lobby and advocate for more women representation in decision-making bodies; encourage the participation of women in political, economic and social spheres at regional, national and international level and to promote the exchange of experiences and contribute to the defence of human rights especially those of young girls, children and women. The Caucus comprises of all female Members of the National Council and it is led by the Chairperson of the National Council, Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams.

2. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to its Annual Activity Plan for 2017/2018 Financial Year, the Women Caucus, represented by a Four Member delegation led by the Vice-Chairperson, Honourable Hilma Nicanor, embarked upon an exchange programme to the Parliament of Rwanda for the purpose of sharing and exchanging information and experiences on women representation at all levels of government decision-making bodies.

The Caucus chose to visit Rwanda based on the country's exemplary record on issues concerning women's rights, gender equality and women empowerment, as well as its success in political empowerment as it is ranked, the country with the highest number of women in Parliament in the world.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

3.1 The primary aim of the visit was to share and exchange information and experiences on women representation at all levels of government decision-making bodies. Among other issues, the Women Caucus focussed on the following:

- strategies and formulas used within political parties to ensure women representation in all structures of government and parliament;
- legislation and policies that guide political parties in selecting their representatives to decision-making bodies;
- quota system used and the application thereof;

- policies in place, to empower women in different level of life, including access to finance, employment, human rights, education and medical services; exchanging ideas on exercising oversight functions over the Executive; and
- Exchanging ideas on how to strengthen the operation of the Women Caucus.

4. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF RWANDA

- 4.1 The Republic of Rwanda is a sovereign state in Central and East Africa and it is one of the smallest countries on the African mainland. Located a few degrees south of the Equator, Rwanda is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- 4.2 Rwanda is in the African Great Lakes region and is highly elevated; its geography is dominated by mountains in the west and savanna to the east, with numerous lakes throughout the country. The Capital City is Kigali.
- 4.3 The population is relatively young and predominantly rural, with a density among the highest in Africa. Rwandans are drawn from just one cultural and linguistic group, the Banyarwanda, although within this group there are three subgroups: the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.
- 4.4 The Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a civil war in 1990. Social tensions erupted in the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi, in which Hutu extremists killed an estimated 500,000 to 1.3 million Tutsi and moderate Hutu. The RPF ended the genocide with a military victory.
- 4.5 The president His Excellency Paul Kagame of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, took office in 2000. The country has been governed by an ordered administrative hierarchy since pre-colonial times; there are five provinces delineated by borders drawn in 2006.

5. GENDER CONTEXT IN RWANDA

- 5.1 After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda was economically, politically and socially devastated. Rwanda recognized that recovery would only be possible with both women and men playing central role. The greatest achievement since 1994 genocide against the Tutsi has been taking the women of Rwanda from being these desperate

victims to leading actors in the reconstruction of the country, today Rwanda is globally considered a model for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- 5.2 Rwanda recognises the need of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as part of its strategy for poverty reduction and realisation of vision 2020. This political will has materialised not only by ratifying of international conventions and agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also by putting in place various institutions such as Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), National Women Council (NWC), Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and many other local NGOs for women empowerment and advocacy.
- 5.3 The Government of Rwanda also developed policies and strategies for this purpose. The political participation of Rwandan women has been facilitated by a constitutional mandate and the work of key institutions, notably the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Rwanda Women Parliamentarians Forum (FFRP), National Women's Council and the Gender Monitoring Office. Rwandan women have created a remarkable political space for themselves in just twenty years.

6. MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- 6.1 In order to gain an overview into Rwanda's success story in promoting gender equality and women empowerment, notably, its mark on high representation of women in decision-making bodies, the following meetings and visits with various key stakeholders were scheduled, including a tour of the Parliament of Rwanda:
- Courtesy Call On The Right Honourable Speaker Of The Chamber Of Deputies;
 - Meeting with the Committee On Political and Gender Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies;
 - Meeting With the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (FFRP);
 - Meeting With the Rwanda Gender Machinery (NWC & GMO);
 - Visit to Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre;
 - Visit to Rwanda Governance Board (RGB);
 - Visit to Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe;
 - Visit to Isange One Stop Centre; and
 - Tour of the Parliament of Rwanda and Presentation of the Museum

7. COURTESY CALL TO THE SPEAKER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

- 7.1 The Women Caucus delegation paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Right Honourable Mukabalisa Donatille, where the leader of the delegation, Honorable Hilma Nicanor outlined the purpose of the visit and the reason why the Namibian Parliament chose to visit Rwanda. Honourable Nicanor expressed appreciation that Rwanda accepted Namibia's request to share its success story on women empowerment, stating that the two countries could foster relations in order to strengthen their parliamentary roles.
- 5.2 She pointed out that as women parliamentarians bearing the mandate to work on the issues pertaining to women development and women participation in decision making positions, it was deemed necessary to visit Rwanda, as a country recording the highest representation of women in Parliament to learn the best practices and share experiences on the achievements of Rwandan legislators in establishing a legislation empowering women.
- 5.3 The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Right Honourable Mukabalisa Donatille extended a warm welcome to the Namibian Parliamentarians and thanked the delegation for selecting Rwanda to share and exchange information and experiences on gender equality and women empowerment.
- 5.4 The Speaker highlighted Rwanda's horrific history which left devastating effect on the country, while acknowledging that the experience has also been a source of strength and unity among Rwandans. The 1994 Genocide against Tutsi affected mainly women, for two reasons; number one for being a Tutsi and number two for being a women. More than one million people lost their lives and the majority were women. Rwandan women are still battling with psychological scars emanating from the devastating effect of the Genocide, as some women were raped and infected with HIV and even gotten pregnant as a result of rape.
- 5.6 The Speaker indicated that, despite the devastating effects of the genocide, Rwanda was obliged to rebuild the nation to the state it is today and this is attributed mainly to strong leadership under the President of Rwanda, His Excellency Paul Kagame and also the

nation's willingness to trust in the leadership which is determined to rebuild the country on the basis of unity and reconciliation.

- 5.7 The delegation was assured of Rwanda's willingness to share the country's journey in ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. She expressed trust that the delegation's visits to key stakeholders would help them to understand the functioning of different institutions involved in promoting gender and women empowerment and their strategies and responsibilities.
- 5.8 The Speaker further stressed the fact that women empowerment is necessary and it is not a women matter but everyone's, hence, it is crucial to partner with the male counterpart. In order to advocate for women development, there is a need to change the mindset, foster partnership with male (girl and boy) as well as to work out strategies to overcome cultural barriers.
- 5.9 The Namibia delegation had an opportunity to carry out a tour at the Museum of the Campaign against Genocide located in Rwanda Parliament Building where they learnt Rwandan experience of patriotism and resilience. Furthermore, the delegation visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, which is one of the many genocide memorial centres across the country.

6. MEETING WITH THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AND GENDER AFFAIRS

- 6.1 The delegation engaged the Committee on Political and Gender Affairs, which is one of the nine Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and has specific gender mainstreaming responsibilities.
- 6.2 The Committee is responsible for issues relating to public administration and state institutional relations; justice; media; non-governmental organisations; gender promotion; promotion of women and family, family property, responsibilities of spouses; and the fight against corruption;

- 6.3 It follows-up on the harmonisation of laws with international conventions that promote women which were ratified by Rwanda; and considers the report of the Ombudsman and preparation of draft recommendations to the Plenary Assembly.
- 6.4 The Committee also work closely with the Gender Monitoring Office to consider its monitoring role, before visiting other institutions and districts to assess the implementation of gender related issues.
- 6.5 Furthermore, it has an obligation of overseeing the implementation of Gender Budget Statement (GBS) as required by the Organic Law on State finances and property and this is prepared in alignment with National Planning framework such as Vision 2020.
- 6.6 Gender Budget Statement is a mandatory annex of the budget Framework Paper submitted to the Parliament to vote the budget bill, thus, the Parliament does not approve the budget in the absence of the GBS. This is to ensure that the Budget is gender sensitive where men and women benefit equally.

7 OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWERS IN RWANDA

- 7.1 The Legislative power in Rwanda is vested in the Parliament composed of two Chambers. Just like in the case of Namibia, Rwanda has a bicameral system consisting of two houses, namely;
- **The Chamber of Deputies** - the Members are known as Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies considers the relevance of the state finance bill and adopts the state finance law; and
 - **The Senate** – the Members are known as Senators. The Senate monitors the application of fundamental principles. It has the power to approve the appointment of senior officials.
- 7.2 The Women Caucus delegation was hosted by the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies is a body elected by the population and entrusted with acting on behalf of the population. The main functions and powers are representing the population, passing legislation and scrutinizing and overseeing executive action.
- 7.3 The Chamber of Deputies is at the best position to promote women’s human rights and does it effectively, in compliance with its mandate: enactment of laws, citizen’s representation and Government oversight.

7.4 The Chamber of Deputies is composed of 80 Deputies of which:

- 53 are elected from a fixed List of names of candidates proposed by political organisations or independent candidates elected by direct universal suffrage based on proportional representation;
- 24 women elected by specific electoral colleges (article 10);
- 2 elected by the National Youth Council (a boy and a girl);
- 2 elected by the National Council of Persons with Disabilities, and
- At least thirty percent (30%) of Deputies must be women.

7.5 A great amount of the Chamber of Deputies business is conducted in Committees and adopted in Plenary Session as such, there are Nine (9) **Standing Committees in the Chamber of Deputies:**

- (a). The Committee on Political and Gender Affairs;
- (b). Economy and Trade;
- (c). Education, Technology, Culture and Youth;
- (d). Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security;
- (e). Social Affairs;
- (f). National Unity, Human Rights and Fight against Genocide;
- (g). Budget and National Patrimony;
- (h). Agriculture, Livestock development and Environment, and
- (i). Public Accounts

8. GENDER RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN REPRESENTATION

8.1 The government of Rwanda approved a new constitution that included a quota system for women at all levels of government in 2003. The legislation mandated that thirty percent (30%) of all representatives, including those in parliament, be women. Rwanda's quota is different than many other systems in that it's not a quota solely on

candidates, but rather reserves a minimum number of seats for women (often known as Equality of Result quotas). Only women are eligible to vote for the women-only seats.

- 8.2 Since the quotas were implemented, additional pieces of women-orientated legislation have been passed, including several laws aimed at preventing and punishing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), laws granting more extensive property rights to women, and key legislation on women in the workforce. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 legislates for the equality between men and women which is affirmed by women occupying at least thirty percent (30%) of positions in decision-making organs.

8.3 ***Table 1: Legal Framework, Policies, Strategies and Programmes to promote Gender Equality***

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><u>POLICIES</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Gender Policy 2. Girls' Education Policy 3. Gender Based-Violence Policy 4. Integrated child rights Policy 5. National Family Policy 6. Early Community Development (ECD) Policy 7. Land Management Policy 8. Decentralization Policy 9. Community Health Insurance Policy | <p><u>LEGAL FRAMEWORK</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rwandan Constitution of 4th June 2003 as revised on December 24, 2015. 2. Gender-Based Violence Law 3. Land Law 4. Matrimonial regimes and successions 5. Law governing Political Parties/prohibits discrimination based on Gender, race and religion 6. The Law regulating labour in Rwanda, 7. The Organic Law on State Finance & Property |
| <p><u>STRATEGIES</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vision 2020 | <p><u>PROGRAMS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G7YP 2. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) |

| | |
|--|--|
| 2. Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II) 3. Women & Youth Access to Finance Strategy 4. Strategic plans to implement policies 5. Gender Sector mainstreaming strategies. 6. Capacity Development Strategy or Gender Equality 7. National Strategy for Mentorship of young Women and Girls 8. Women and Youth access to Finance Strategy 9. National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan 10. Gender Cluster Strategic Plan | 3. NEP 4. Business Development Fund & Savings and Credit Cooperative at Sector level (BDF & SACCO) 5. GIRINKA 6. UMURENGE VUP |
|--|--|

- 8.4 The law relating to elections stipulates that the Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of eighty (80) Deputies including twenty-four (24) women elected according to the administrative entities of the country;
- 8.5 The Organic Law No. 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State finances and property, instituting Gender Responsive Budgeting enforces accountability measures for gender sensitive resources allocation across sectors programmes and Government projects through Gender Budget Statement (GBS).
- 8.6 The Organic Law No. 10/20/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 Governing Political Parties and Politicians prohibits any forms of discrimination based on gender, sex, religious, in political parties;

- 8.7 The Law No. 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulating Labour in Rwanda provides for equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men, and prohibits sexual harassment in the work place;
- 8.8 The Law No.43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land law in Rwanda guarantees women equal rights with men on land access, ownership and utilisation;
- 8.9 The Law No 003/2016 of 30/03/2016 establishing and government maternity leave benefits scheme provides for 12 weeks full paid maternity leave.
- 8.10 The Law No. 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family;
- 8.11 The Law No. 7/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions, - men and women are equal for succession; and
- 8.12 The Law No. 59/2008 of 10/09/2008 on prevention and punishment of Gender-Based Violence.

9. RWANDA'S KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS GENDER AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Rwanda has registered remarkable achievements in the area of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which constitute best practices in this regard, some of which are the following:

9.1 POVERTY REDUCTION

- 9.1.1 The Government of Rwanda devoted considerable efforts to break the cycle of poverty, ignorance and vulnerability among women, by empowering them socially, politically and economically. Rwanda has addressed the issue of poverty for women through a number of strategies, including rooting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the heart of all development strategies, policies and programmes.
- 9.1.2 The country made a strong commitment to integrate gender into policy and strategic planning instruments. In its Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), gender is highlighted as cross cutting issue in all sectors.
- 9.1.3 Additionally, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion initiated a Gender Responsive Budgeting Project to ensure budget allocation to government interventions are gender sensitive.

9.2 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- 9.2.1 Girls' education Policy and its strategic plan put in place by the Ministry of Education to ensure access, retention performance of girls and women at all levels, has been beneficial to all children reducing the previous gap between boys and girls. Education sector reforms enabled education for all, with special attention to the needs of girls, i.e. 9 & 12 YBE, appropriate toilet facilities for girls and girl's room at schools.
- 9.2.2 Emphasis has been put on girls' education in science and technologies. In this regard, some affirmative actions were put in place including the FAWE Girls' schools, Awards for girls, etc.
- 9.2.3 Furthermore, in support to science and technologies, the one laptop per child was introduced and is under implementation, and boys and girls are using computer and internet to improve learning and research skills through internet and other program designed in the laptop.

9.3 ACCESS TO HEALTH

- 9.3.1 National Health Insurance Scheme is put in place for all the population, it offers universal access to affordable and quality medical services. Women are 93% beneficiaries of MUSA, which covers antenatal care and all maternity related services. There is free universal access to services for immunisation and prevention, contraception, children vaccination, Hepatitis B, Cervical Cancer for young girls, as well as mosquito nets.
- 9.3.2 The Reproductive Health Policy is developed. Birth assisted by a professional provider increased from 21%-91% between 2000-2015. There are Health Advisors all over the Country who mobilise and monitor the implementation of health programs in the communities;

9.4 FIGHTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FOR ERADICATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

- 9.4.1 The constitutional foundation has led to major reforms in the legal and justice sectors. Many gender-sensitive and anti-discrimination laws have been passed and revised; such

as the law on prevention and punishment of Gender-Based Violence, on the rights and protection of child against violence.

9.4.2 The Government of Rwanda has put in place following in its efforts to fight violence against women and eradicate Gender-Based Violence:

- Establishment of One Stop centers for Gender-Based Violence survivors care in medical, psychosocial, legal support;
- Promulgation of law preventing and punishing Gender Based Violence;
- Enacting gender sensitive laws and reviewing existing discriminatory laws ;
- Establishment of anti-Gender-Based Violence and child protection committees from the grassroots level to the National level;
- Gender Desk in Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Defense Force and in National Public Prosecution Authority;
- Free hotline in Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Defense Force and in and in National Public Prosecution Authority; and
- A Men's association that strives to sensitize the population and eradicate gender based violence specifically violence against women.

9.5 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

9.5.1 The land law which guarantees women equal rights with men on access, ownership and utilisation has increased women's access and control of such a major economic resource.

9.5.2 A number of programmes were put in place to increase women's access to finance and the formal business sector. These include the "Women's Guarantee Fund established to facilitate women entrepreneurs and Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) without collateral to obtain loans in commercial banks and microfinance institutions.

9.5.3 A special fund; the Business Development Fund (BDF) has been put it place to accelerating women's economic empowerment by offering women projects a guaranty for up to 75%;

9.5.4 The Women's Association initiated has developed Micro Finance Institutions called "COOPEDU";

9.5.5 Others programmes aimed at empowering women economically include Savings and Credit Cooperatives at Sector level (Umurenge SACCO) of which 49% of beneficiaries are women, the Youth and Women Access to Finance Strategy aimed at consolidating gains through capacity building in financial literacy, financial access and business advisory services, and pro-poor programs such as “Girinka” or One Cow per Poor Family, which has had the triple impact on poor families increasing their income from selling milk, improving family nutrition and increasing farm productivity through access to organic manure.

9.6 DECISION MAKING

9.6.1 Rwanda enjoys political will and this has enabled the country to set up legal, policy, and institutional framework to implement gender commitments starting from the Rwanda National Constitution which enshrines the principles of gender equality and women’s rights. Gender equality and the women empowerment in Rwanda are recognised as central pillars to sustainable development.

9.6.2 Rwanda currently leads the world in women’s representation in lower chamber of the Parliament at 64%. Women are equally highly represented in other organs,

9.6.3 *Table 2: Percentage of women representation in government institutions*

| Institution | Women % |
|--|----------------|
| Senate | 35% |
| Chamber of Deputies | 56.25%). |
| Cabinet | 39% |
| Minister of State | 40% |
| Provincial Governors | 40% |
| District council members | 43.2 % |
| Vice Mayors in charge of social affairs | 83.3% |
| Judiciary (the Chief Justice is a woman) | 50% |

Gender Institutional Mechanisms

- Ministry in Charge of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)
- Gender Monitoring Office
- National Women's Council

9.7 JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- 9.7.1 Access to Justice Office (MAJ) were established in every district to facilitate easy access to justice to the community especially women and children through conducting legal literacy and provision of legal services. The Ministry of Justice avails lawyers to assist all children in conflict with the law and special chambers for children exist.
- 9.7.2 Women constituted over 30% of the more than 160,000 Gacaca (transitional justice system) judges countrywide.
- 9.7.3 Women have continued to play an important role in the community mediation and conflict resolution structures (Abunzi). They make up 50% of community mediation and conflict resolution committee (Abunzi). For offences committed by minors, rehabilitation centers allow children to have access to key services that are conducive to a child's development.
- 9.7.4 Gender desk in police, Army and in Prosecution Authority, Establishment of National Forensic Laboratory; GBV and Community Policing committees from the Village to the National level.
- 9.7.5 Free hotline in Rwanda National Police (RNP), Rwanda Defense Force (RDF), Prosecution Authority, Office of Ombudsperson, Gender Monitoring Office, Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) & the MIGEPROF.

9.8 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

- 9.8.1 The Women Caucus delegation visited the Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC) to learn from Rwanda's holistic approach to fighting Gender-Based Violence.
- 9.8.2 Isange One Stop Centre, is a model that provides holistic response to GBV victims under one roof. A number of 28 IOSCs were established and by the end of June 2017, 43 IOSCs are fully operational.

- 9.8.3 The IOSC is a victim-centred. It provides immediate care to victims of GVB while also helping to collect evidence to prosecute the crime committed as a result of the assault. Its effectiveness is pendent on its ability to provide physical and psychological treatment and to facilitate the process leading to justice for the victim.
- 9.8.4 Isange is a phrase in Kinyarwanda meaning “Feel at Home” It has been understood that among the many effects on victims of GVB is loss of self-confidence. It was therefore essential that the name of the centre capture the victims’ loss of self-confidence, self-esteem, and trust. At the level of GVB, the name connotes reaching out to the sensibilities of the victims who come forward to receive care from emphatic practitioners who can comprehend their predicament and are ready to receive, care for, and place them on a restorative path.
- 9.8.5 The Centre is called “One Stop” because the centre provide all services required by victims of Gender-Based Violence under one roof such as judicial services, medical treatment, psychosocial services, medico-legal services etc. All these services to GBV victims are offered for free.
- 9.8.6 The awareness-raising campaign are done regularly and they have helped in informing the population on the importance of reporting cases of abuse as soon as they occur, in order to preserve the evidence.
- 9.8.7 The impact of the Isange One Stop Centre is traceable to the difference it has made in the lives of its beneficiaries and the global recognition it has earned as a result.
- 9.8.8 The Centre has been a source of inspiration for visitors from all over the world, including Namibia, who have gone to observe first-hand the positive stories they have had. Its impact continues to inform important decisions regarding appropriate responses to the problem of GVB.
- 9.8.9 However, social and cultural forces can be enduring and pose a challenge to efforts to extend services to victims of GVB because it is difficult to seek justice in community where mind-sets inclined towards blaming victims of abuse for their suffering are still prevalent.

9.9 HEFORSHE RWANDA

9.9.1 The Government of Rwanda launched the HeForShe solidarity campaign for gender equality initiated by UN Women in 2015. The country wide campaign engages men and boys as agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights by encouraging them to take action against inequalities faced by women and girls. One of the commitment of His Excellence, Paul Kagame is eradicating GVB in all forms by 2020.

10. KEY ENABLERS FOR IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN IN EMPOWERMENT IN RWANDA

- 10.1 Political will and Leadership;
- 10.2 Financing for Gender Equality: Gender Responsive Budgeting and GBS, focusing on service delivery;
- 10.3 Gender made a cross cutting issue: vision 2020, EDPRS 1 and 2, 7 Year Government of Rwanda Programme;
- 10.4 Equal access to education, training and technology;
- 10.5 Equal access to and control over economic and productive resources; and
- 10.6 Synergy between all Gender and Women actors: National Gender Machinery, Civil Society, Private Sector

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING PROGRAM IN RWANDA

11. NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY

The Government of Rwanda established various structures and organisations including the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (FFRP), Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the National Women's Council (NWC) and the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) towards ensuring implementation of the National Gender Policy. These institutions are expected to work in a concerted manner to ensure that the gender equality agenda is institutionalised, with the One UN in Rwanda providing the requisite technical and financial support.

11.1 RWANDA WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (FFRP)

- 11.1 The Forum was established in 1996 and it is a membership based organisation, having its internal rules and regulations. The Forum also has its own constitution and budget and employees staff with technical skills to support the forum in fulfilling its obligations and functions.
- 11.2 The FFRP was set up by women members of the National Transitional Parliament regardless of the diversity resulting from the country's history, member's background and different political ideologies.
- 11.3 The FFRP serves the Parliament of Rwanda as a catalyst for the respect of gender equality and women empowerment principles within the Parliament. The forum lobbies and advocates for enactment of gender-responsive laws and gender-based oversight and it is also active within the National Gender Machinery and therefore, contributes to the advancement and sustainability of Gender Equality gains.
- 11.4 Visionary founder members decided to put together their voice as women in order to strengthen the role of women parliamentarians in restoring unity of Rwandans and contributing to the rebuilding of the country social fabric destroyed by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.
- 11.5 From the minority of women (17%) in 1996, FFRP has now 89 members out of 106 Parliamentarians. Women are effective members while men are defined as partners, the inclusion of male MPs in a forum of women parliamentarians has strengthened the gender agenda of the forum.
- 11.6 The Forum has recorded many achievements in its ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. It has influenced the enactment of new laws aimed at addressing the needs of women and children, some of which are mentioned above.

11.2 MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND FAMILY PROMOTION (MIGEPROF)

- 11.2.1 As a national machinery, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) is responsible for promoting gender equality throughout the development process of the country.

- 11.2.2 The Ministry plays a leading role in the implementation process through coordinating the implementation of the National Gender Policy; disseminating the National Gender Policy widely, at national, regional and international levels; providing leadership in the dissemination of the National Gender Policy; mobilise resources for the implementation of gender interventions; and liaising and networking at national, regional and international level.
- 11.2.3 The Ministry is further has a mandate of ensuring that the expansion, coordination and implementation of appropriate policies on gender equality and women empowerment, family promotion and children's rights protection are a success.
- 11.2.4 It promotes family welfare and peaceful co-existence of its members, protecting the rights of children and ensuring that they are free from exposure to any risk and abuse. The central focus aims at providing institutional framework for high end research and evidence based interventions to address risks and abuse and ensure that the Rwandan families, notably women and children are healthy.

11.3 NATIONAL WOMEN COUNCIL (NWC)

- 11.3.1 The National Women Council constitutes a forum for women's empowerment and active participation in national development processes. The NWC's role includes advocating for women's rights and gender equality; mobilizing women to participate
- 11.3.2 All Rwandan girls upon attaining the age of 18, become members of the NWC; which operates at village, cell, district, and sector levels to mobilise women's participation in decision-making. Women obtain civic education information on the importance of political participation and experience participation through electing or running for NWC positions.
- 11.3.3 During the national parliamentary elections, the NWC trains women candidates on effective campaigning, building self-esteem and confidence, and how to promote gender equality once elected.

11.4 GENDER MONITORING OFFICE (GMO)

- 11.4.1 The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) is a governmental body that monitors, advises and advocates for gender equality in all institutions in the country. It was set up for

evaluating that government and institutions are implementing gender principles. It monitors gender mainstreaming in all sectors by all stakeholders. The GMO issues an annual report directly to the office of the Prime Minister who will take to task any sector that does not comply with the policy.

- 11.4.2 The GMO was an official observer for the Parliamentary elections from September 16th-18th 2013. With support from One UN/UN Women, the office was involved in advocacy and monitoring throughout electoral process, from pre-election civic education programs, political parties, campaigns, voting administration, to post-elections.

12 RWANDA GOVERNANCE BOARD (RGB)

- 12.1 The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is an independent state agency established by the law N°56/2016 of 16/12/2016 establishing the Rwanda Governance Board and determining its mission, organization and functioning. With the aforementioned new law N°56/2016 of 16/12/2016 the mandate of RGB was expanded. It was given autonomy and additional responsibilities.
- 12.2 Its Mission is centred on promoting the principles of good governance as it is embedded in the legal framework that established the organization, while its Vision aims at Fostering Good Governance for Sustainable Development.
- 12.3 These include monitoring of service delivery in both public and private institutions, preserving, protecting and promoting the use of home-grown solutions in Rwanda, give pre-authorisation and follow up studies and research carried out in Rwanda on governance and Home Grown Solutions (HGS); advising the Government on the implementation of the decentralization and capacity development policy; registration international non-governmental organisations and to monitor their operations, registration of political organisations and monitoring their operations and coordination and follow up the Joint Action Development Forum activities.
- 12.4 Home Grown Solutions are culturally owned practices translated into sustainable development programs. As part of efforts to reconstruct Rwanda and nurture a shared national identity, the Government of Rwanda drew on aspects of Rwandan culture and traditional practices to enrich and adapt its development programs to the country's needs and context.

- 12.5 RGB has full independence in exercising its mission and has the powers to request for explanations relating to governance, performance and service delivery in public and private institutions and to request for administrative sanctions against defaulting institutions or staff members, to request for explanations, suspend registration certificate or revoke the legal personality to non-governmental organisations or faith-based organisations; to suspend or terminate the authorization of an international non-governmental institution to operate in Rwanda , to take actions against any political organization which fails to comply with the law and to certify that the means being used in Rwanda genuinely belong to home-grown solutions and hold accountable the person misusing it or using it without authorisation.

13. NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM OF POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS (NFPO)

- 13.1 The National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations (NFPO) is a constitutional entity as stipulated by art. 59 of the Rwanda Constitution of 2003 revised in 2015. The NFPO is a platform that brings together, Political Organisations for the purposes of political dialogue, and building consensus and national cohesion. It operates under the:

- Organic Law NO 10/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 governing political organisations and politicians (art.49)
- Internal Rules and Regulations of the Forum and Political Organisations amended on February 13th , 2014 (art.15)
- Code of Conduct of Political Organisations and their members

13.1.1 ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Based on the NFPO Strategic Plan (2011-2015), the NFPO activities are carried out based on the following strategic axis:

- **Promotion of consultation and political dialogue** through regular sessions of the Forum's General Assembly which are held once within three (3) months;
- **Consolidate the national cohesion and political diversity** where the Forum provides advice in resolution of internal Political Party's conflicts, upon a written request.
- **Strengthening the capacity of political parties and their members** through training and Party Leadership Program which covers topics linked to Political Party's capacity building

needs, these include: Political communication, Recruitment and Membership, Leadership and Political conflict Management, Governance measurement and indexes, English language and communication skills.

- **Youth Political Leadership Academy (YPLA)** which provides training to the Youth from Political Parties in leadership and Politics and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meaningfully participate in national governance and development.

Since 2010, about 120 Political cadres have been trained through the NDI support. From 2011 up to June 2014, the program got the national coverage at all Provincial Headquarters through the UNDP partnership; about 660 youth were trained and awarded a certificate.

Intermediate Local Party Leadership Training Program: The purpose of the program is to improve knowledge and capacity in politics and governance for the representatives of Political Organisations at local organs of their leadership, with intermediate level of education and mainly in charge of communication, sensitization and mobilization. It also reinforces the party field activities and leadership at grassroots.

From February up to June 2014; 1311 Grass roots Political party leaders from eleven (11) political parties have been trained and were provided handouts to use for their further references. Each political party has chosen four Districts and all have been covered.

Gender Leadership Training Program: In order to be compliant with the compulsory 30% women's representation at its leadership organs as provided for by the law. The Forum developed a training project aiming at urging women occupying positions in the political organisations' leadership organs to approach other women members of political organisations to share ideas on women's importance and role in the leadership of political organisations in particular and in national politics in general.

This activity aims at sensitising women for joining the leadership of their respective political organisations in order to follow the example of their colleagues who campaigned for leadership positions before them. This will also be used to mainstream gender issues in a party leadership and programs. Then, it will be a tool for an establishment of a party women networking through gender wing operations.

14. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The NFPO has registered key achievements including:

- Conducted a survey on women representation within Political Parties' Leadership (2011);
- Developed a documentary film on Youth Political Leadership Academy program;
- Designated eight (8) Senators to the Senate;
- Conducted a National Seminar on Rwandese Political Philosophy and national consciousness, with the objective of « Highlighting an integrated Rwandese national political philosophy for national consolidation »;
- From 2003, the NFPO established the Election Observation Mission to monitor any national election to be carried out in the country, and deploy observers from different political organisations to monitor the election process starting from the campaigning events to Election Day itself.
- Contributed in the drafting process of different laws including the Organic law governing political organisations and politicians and Electoral Law.
- The NFPO participates in the preparation of the annual commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, especially in the preparation activities of the closing of the commemoration week which is held at Rebero Genocide memorial site.

15. CHALLENGES

Notwithstanding all of this, women in Rwanda still face several challenges: more female-headed households live in poverty than those headed by males (47% as against 44.3%). Women's literacy rates are lower than men's (60% as against 70%) which further constrains already limited opportunities in terms of accessing resources, creating and managing small businesses and participating in decision-making processes in the household and society. Gender-based violence among women and girls remains an area of serious concern - in 2010 at least 56% of women aged 15-49 years reported experiencing physical or sexual violence. Gender-based violence remains widely tolerated and under-reported.

Furthermore, Rwanda remains a highly patriarchal society, where power relations between men and women, boys and girls undermine and diminish the social, economic and political

contributions of girls and women to their own development, that of their families, communities and the nation. Overall, there is limited awareness of existing gender sensitive laws among poor women and men which is exacerbated by the high illiteracy rates amongst both genders. Limited access to economic opportunities also remains a major barrier to women's economic empowerment in spite of commendable measures that have been undertaken to remedy the situation.

An analysis of the gender mainstreaming process in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) I sectors identified the following additional bottlenecks that require particular attention:

- Inadequate sector gender strategies to guide gender mainstreaming processes in specific sectors
- Inconsistency in systematically collecting sex disaggregated data
- Weak capacity in conducting gender analysis and low gender mainstreaming skills
- Insufficient resource allocation to gender equality initiatives and unsystematic tracking of investments in gender equality
- Inadequate coordination between the National Gender Machinery Institutions in implementing gender mainstreaming in sector strategies and district development plans.

15. PRO-FEMME/TWESE HAMWE

- 15.1 Pro-Femmes/ Twese Hamwe is a national women's organization in Rwanda founded in 1992 that is recognized internationally for its contributions to rebuilding society after the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
- 15.2 These women took on the role of reconstructing what had been damaged. In order to restore Rwanda the women created projects to improve the economy, establish peace, and offer new opportunities. The 13 women that started this organization were determined to speak out for injustices, especially against women, so they became a voice for change. The genocide incident caused great destruction; however, since 1994 the organization has grown to include 58 member associations. These women work hard to make the changes and help the minorities grow and develop.

- 15.3 The purpose of the organization is not only about the Rwanda genocide, even though that is when it had its greatest impact, it was created to enhance women activity and provide recognition in favour of women. Due to all of the discrimination women were facing back in the early 1990s, this was an effective way to put up fight.
- 15.4 Because of this organization Rwanda is amongst the best countries in the world in terms of women representation. Working with women was not enough to help society as whole, therefore, they ensured all human rights were being met so that there was no social injustice.
- 15.5 Their achievements include "peacekeeping, conflict management, mediation and reconciliation that empower women in leadership roles. As well as helping soldiers, prisoners, and any discrimination within the people. Pro-Femmes received the 1996 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the promotion of tolerance and non-violence "for their outstanding contributions in rehabilitating families and communities devastated by mass violence, through their activities fostering a climate of peace based on tolerance and non-violence.

16. LESSONS LEARNT

- 16.1 Policy framework, political will and Leadership are the key driving forces for advancing the GEWE agenda;
- 16.2 Gender specific programmes are necessary for promoting GEWE but should not substitute gender mainstreaming;
- 16.3 Capacity enhancement at institutional and individual level is key for effective gender mainstreaming Budget for gender equality and the empowerment of women is a condition sine qua none for the implementation of gender equality agenda;
- 16.4 Gender should be tackled in holistic manner not left to gender machineries or women empowerment institutions;
- 16.5 Good collaboration, networking, partnership with strategic actors and women empowerment organizations and media are crucial for advancing GE& WE agenda;
- 16.6 Partnership with men reduces cultural based resistances and strengthens women caucuses;
- 16.7 Community outreach and networking with women local leaders maintain the relevance of representation;

16.8 Greater accountability for GE is critical for advancing and sustaining the gains.

17. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WOMEN CAUCUS CAN STRENGTHEN ITS OPERATIONS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING:

- 17.1 Institutional/capacity building for gender equality;
- 17.2 Lobby for adoption and development of laws and policies that promote gender equality;
- 17.3 Initiate laws that promote gender quotas in decision making;
- 17.4 Create women's parliamentary organisation like FFRP of the Parliament of Rwanda;
- 17.5 Encourage women and girls to participate in political affairs;
- 17.6 Mentoring, network and study tours in other experienced women parliamentarian Networks.

18. WAY FORWARD

- 18.1 Continue to advance and Sustain Gender Equality;
- 18.2 Focus on women economic empowerment;
- 18.3 Sustaining women participation in decision making organs at all levels;
- 18.4 Improve service delivery to better respond to the needs of women and girls by reinforcing;
- 18.5 Mentorship of young girls for nurturing future leaders; and
- 18.6 Accountability for gender equality and women empowerment.

19. CONCLUSION

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 4th June 2003 revised in 2015 is the cornerstone for positive legal and policy frameworks that make Rwanda a “hub” for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is evident that a series of factors contributed to the rapid advancement of female representation in Rwanda and the subsequent passage of women-focused legislation. The distorted gender ratio resulting from the genocide, the implementation of the quota system, and a governmental system that both appoints and supports high-level female officials were each essential to the rise of female leaders in Rwanda.

Gender equality and women empowerment has been a cornerstone of the Government of Rwanda's development strategy and a proven source of development progress. Good progress

has been achieved over a period of many challenges emanating from the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994.

Indeed, Namibia has a lot to learn from Rwanda as far as the advancement of women into leadership position is concerned.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 20.1 The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to propose for the amendment of Sections 77(1) and 86(1) of the Electoral Act, Act 24 of 1992, dealing with the submission of the Party List for the National Assembly and the Local Authority elections and Section 80(1) that deals with the submission of candidates for the Regional Council elections, in order to make provision for a quota system of 30% of women in order to promote gender equality.
- 20.2 The Office of the Prime Minister to introduce a policy that would mandate all Organisations, Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) to provide for a quota system of 30% of women in all decision-making positions at all levels of government, at national, regional and local level in order to ensure gender mainstreaming.
- 20.3 The government to look into the possibility of establishing an independent government body such as “The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO)” that will advise, advocate and monitor gender mainstreaming in all institutions in the country.
- 20.4 The Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to ensure that budgets of all O/M/As are gender sensitive before the budget is tabled in Parliament; and also to ensure that budget allocation to government interventions are gender sensitive.
- 20.5 The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to look into the possibility of establishing a “Women’s Guarantee Fund” to facilitate women entrepreneurs to obtain collateral free loans at commercial banks and microfinance institutions.
- 20.6 The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to:
- (i) set up programmes aimed at empowering women economically, that would include the Savings and Credit Cooperatives at regional level.
 - (ii) introduce capacity building programmes for women in financial literacy, financial access and business advisory services.
- 20.7 The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in collaboration with civil society organizations that deals with women issues to constitute a forum for women’s empowerment to:
- (i) advocate for women’s rights and gender equality;

- (ii) mobilise women to participate in socio-economic, political and other developmental activities;
- (iii) ensure that all women and girls of 18 years and above becomes members of such an organization. The organization is expected to operate at all levels such as: national, regional and local level.

20.8 The National Council to look into capacity building programmes for women MPs through the National Council Learning and Development initiatives.

Signed by:

Hon. Hilma Nicanor, MP
Vice-Chairperson

28 September 2018

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