

ISSUE

56

May 2016

RWANDAFUL

The Hague

Monthly
Roundup of
Rwanda's
Stories

World Economic Forum on Africa in Kigali



On 11 May 2016 over 1,500 global leaders were convened in Kigali, Rwanda to take part in discussions on how to harness the power of digital transformation in connecting Africa's resources as the 26th World Economic Forum on Africa got underway. Themed "Connecting Africa's resources through digital transformation", the meeting built on the discussions held at Davos-Klosters in January this year, on how to master the fourth industrial revolution.

In Kigali, the forum sought to identify priorities and actions for African leaders as they target to build economies resilient to today's challenges and able to flourish in the increasingly digital, converged marketplaces of tomorrow.

Speaking alongside former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US Philanthropist Howard Buffett, President Paul Kagame reiterated, in 'A Conversation on Partnerships', that although partnerships are vital to achieving sustainable development, how they are managed vis-à-vis ownership is key.

"We want to have ownership of the very things we should be doing for ourselves. How we manage partnership and ownership so that resources do not become a substitute for the choices of the people is important," said President Kagame.

President Kagame narrated Rwanda's journey of rebuilding where he talked about the fight against corruption, accountability and the recently held referendum to change the Constitution.

"We had to create value out of nothing and had to involve everyone, leaders and citizens. It was about saying we need to create something for ourselves; we need to have a future. We lost the past but we need to regain the future," said the President.

Talking about the fight against corruption, the Head of State pointed out that people need to understand the consequences; and what diverting funds meant for citizens' wellbeing in terms of health, education, etc. He further stressed that the cost of corruption is huge – which is why people need to hold themselves and each other accountable.

"Most investors want stability, and Rwanda is exactly that," said US philanthropist Howard Buffett who has invested US\$ 500 Million to support agricultural transformation in Rwanda.

Commenting on last year's referendum to review the Constitution, Howard Buffett said that every democracy goes through changes – he referred to the United States' Constitution which has been amended 27 times to date.

"This is not my or your future, this is Rwandans' future. It is imperative that they drive what will achieve success. Let's not think we know better than Rwandans [about] what they want for the future," remarked Howard Buffett.



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REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
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www.netherlands.embassy.gov.rw
ambalahaye@minaffet.gov.rw

Africa can only claim its place at the table by earning it – President Kagame tells WEF delegates

Thursday, 12 May 2016 – President Paul Kagame has said that Africa can only claim its place at the table by earning it. The President was speaking on a panel discussing “Africa’s Fourth Industrial Revolution” where he gave insights on how Africa can use the Fourth Industrial Revolution to deliver economic growth and social prosperity.

President Kagame spoke alongside African Development Bank President Dr Adesina Akinwumi, Graca Machel of Foundation for Community Development, and Dominic Barton of McKinsey. The panel was moderated by Philipp Rösler, Head of the Centre for Regional Strategies and Member of the Managing Board at the World Economic Forum. The Head of State pointed out that the World Economic Forum’s approach to Africa is free of pity and apprehension.

“The Africa that the world meets through WEF is a continent of opportunity and partnership, and a full actor in the story of globalisation, sharing common values and ambitions. Moreover, to be able to convene the Forum here, in Rwanda, demonstrates that optimism about Africa’s prospects is always the best response to adversity,” said President Kagame.

The President further emphasised that although the Fourth Industrial Revolution builds on the previous ones which largely passed Africa by, the latter shouldn’t still be playing catch-up by the time the Fifth Industrial Revolution comes around. He called on WEF participants to use the forum to look for ways to harness the Fourth Industrial Revolution for everyone’s benefits.

Speaking about what Africa needs to successfully take part in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, African Development Bank President Adesina Akinwumi cited universal access to electricity, broadband connectivity, and skills as key drivers which will enable the continent to take in any revolution.

Echoing President Kagame’s stance on gender equality, Graca Machel of Foundation for Community Development said that as the three previous revolutions left women behind, “today, if we are looking at the fourth we need to bring women – who constitute over 50% of our population, on board. Women need to have access to new technology and adequate infrastructure. What they are using is maybe from the 18th century.”

Today’s panels deliberated on what the African content can do to catch-up with the rest of the world in terms of digital transformation.

Notable panellists in today’s discussions included Senegalese President Mack Sall, Guinean (Conakry) President Alpha Conde, and South African Deputy President Cyril M. Ramaphosa.



World Economic Forum on Africa to Focus on Connecting Africa's Digital Transformation

The role of Africa in a global economy that is becoming increasingly characterised by machine learning than manpower, and where economic prosperity is built on the knowledge and ingenuity of people rather than natural resources will be the focus of the 26th World Economic Forum on Africa, taking place in Kigali, Rwanda from 11 to 13 May 2016.

Convening under the theme, "Connecting Africa's Resources Through Digital Transformation", the discussion in Kigali will take off where the Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters in January, theme "Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution" left off: by seeking to identify priorities and actions for Africa's leaders as they look to build economies resilient to today's challenges and able to flourish in the increasingly digital, converged marketplaces of tomorrow.

Speaking the pre-forum press conference today, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Claver Gatete said that an entrepreneurial, knowledge-intensive economy has been the foundation for inclusive growth in Rwanda.

"The World Economic Forum on Africa allows us to take this conversation further and identify opportunities for public-private partnership that will generate more jobs and higher living standards in Africa as a whole. The forum has added value on the development course of Africa," said Minister Gatete.

Participating in discussions will be over 1,200 leaders from government, business, civil society, academia, media and the arts.

The Head of Africa and Member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum, Elsie Kanza pointed out that this year's World Economic Forum on Africa is an opportunity for the world to get to know Rwanda as an amazing story of economic transformation.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution presents a unique opportunity to build stronger, fairer, more prosperous societies but this can only be achieved through strong institutions, greater regional integration and investment in key areas such as infrastructure, education and industries. There is vast scope for public-private cooperation to help realize these goals," said Elsie Kanza.

The forum will also be an occasion for the world to learn about what Africa has to offer in terms of digital transformation.

Key participations from the region include: host country Rwanda, President Paul Kagame and Prime Minister Anastase Murekezi; Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire; Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia; Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon; Alpha Condé, President of Guinea; Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya; Macky Sall, President of Senegal; and Faure Gnassingbé, President of Togo.

Additionally Cyril M. Ramaphosa, Deputy President of South Africa; Samia Suluhu, Vice-President of Tanzania; Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh, Minister of Economy, Finance, Industry and Planning of Djibouti; Joshua Setipa, Minister of Trade and Industry of Lesotho; Abdurahman Yusuf Ali Aynte, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Somalia; and Patrick Chinamasa, Minister of Finance of Zimbabwe.

Other leaders outside the region who will participate are: Lillianne Ploumen Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands; Mikhail Bogdanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Kristina Persson, Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation of Sweden; and Michael Froman, US Trade Representative. Representatives from International Organizations are: Arancha Gonzalez Laya, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC); Peter Maurer, President, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Kanayo F. Nwanze, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Co-Chairs of the World Economic on Africa are: Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, President, African Development Bank (AfDB); Dominic Barton, Global Managing Director, McKinsey & Company; Tony O. Elumelu, Chairman, Heirs Holding; Graça Machel, Founder, Foundation for Community; and Tarek Sultan Al Essa, Chief Executive Officer and Vice-Chairman of the Board, Agility.



The right choice of Venue! Rwanda to host The 26th World Economic Forum (WEF) Summit

The 26th World Economic Forum on Africa will be held in Kigali, Rwanda. The forum will take place between May 11 and 13 in Kigali. The summit gathers policy makers, economists, scholars, leaders and private sector investors from across the globe to discuss solutions to some of the most pressing needs and challenges facing African economies. The WEF 2016 is Rwanda's proclamation to the world that it's good to do business in Rwanda!

It is time the rich, powerful and, leaders head to Rwanda, a country of a thousand hills to discuss the big issues of the day and attempt to put the world on right track. It is not by coincidence that WEF summit will take place in Kigali-Rwanda. By WEF taking place in Rwanda is declaration that Rwanda is a big player in thinking big on how the world can transform economically. WEF had made the right choice in choosing Rwanda as the next host because Rwanda is a reflection of the potential on the African continent. The 2015 World Bank Doing Business Report has ranked Rwanda 46th out of 189 countries worldwide, as well as rated the 3rd easiest place to do business in all of Sub Saharan Africa.

Rwanda has become an incredible place to do business and the government has been implementing a strategy to improve the business environment for all entrepreneurs and has brought tangible results.

Under the theme Connecting Africa's Resources through Digital Transformation, the World Economic Forum on Africa will convene regional and global leaders from business, government and civil society to discuss catalysts that can drive radical structural transformation, strengthen public-private collaboration on key global challenges and explore big ideas that can deliver shared prosperity in the region.

This year's WEF edition will attract an estimated participation of more than 1,500 delegates, including heads of state. Beyond planned sessions, the forum will bring together business leaders with some informal sessions turning into regional enterprises.

For Africans who will attend the WEF, good news is that, Rwanda has made it easier through RwandAir which currently flies to 18 destinations in Africa making it easy to connect from almost any part of the continent to come to Kigali, this in addition to other airlines that land in the country. Also Rwanda has made it possible for all Passport-holding Africans to receive visas on arrival in Kigali while others can apply for an entry permit online which they can receive within three days.

As Rwanda's Minister of Finance stated, "participants from countries with winter seasons, needn't to carry winter clothes as Rwanda has no winter seasons but cautioned them against carrying plastic bags as they're prohibited under Rwanda law".

For Business people who will attend the WEF summit, don't forget to visit Rwanda development Board(RDB). Rwanda Development Board is a government institution charged with promoting investment and facilitating market entry for investors in Rwanda. RDB offers a range of services to potential investors including assistance in acquiring the licenses, certificates, approvals, authorizations and permits required by law to set up and operate a business enterprise in Rwanda.

In Rwanda you'll be greeted by the warmth of the Rwandan people as soon you arrive at the airport. Rwanda is one of only three countries in the world where the critically endangered mountain gorillas live. There are only 780 mountain gorillas still in existence and one third of these are in Rwanda. Those who will attend the summit should take advantage to visit several places to explore the country's beauty and those who have long held wishes of Mountain Gorilla tracking, it will be their chance to get it done.

By any measure, the WEF 2016 is not the conclusion of Rwanda's story of being an economic and industrial hub, but an affirmation that Rwanda has been identified by the World Bank as one of the world's fastest growing economies!

African leaders called on to tap into digital revolution at World Economic Forum

African leaders have been called on to tap into the opportunities provided by digital, gender and agriculture revolutions to ensure that the continent keeps rising with its people. The call was made at the just concluded World Economic Forum on Africa which was taking place in Kigali, Rwanda.

At the forum's last panel discussion entitled "Africa's Pathways to Transformation", delegates deliberated on how African economies can navigate the changing global context.

Among the key factors to drive Africa's sustained economic growth, participants at the forum outlined:

- Inclusive growth
- Implementation of all the changes deemed important
- Special attention to women and the youth
- And visionary leadership

"There has to be an ecosystem of accountability. We need to bring everyone on board and set up mechanisms under which governments, private sector, other partners work. To sustain growth, we need to have everyone play his role," said Rwanda's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Claver Gatete who was among the panellists.

Minister Gatete further pointed out that Africa needs to take seriously the issue of productivity, and look at the value chain from farmers to industry to ensure that it moves smoothly.

In his closing remarks, Philip Rosler, a Member of WEF's Managing Board commended Rwanda for "setting new standards" for the forum, and revealed that the next WEF Africa will be held in South Africa mid-next year.

Government of Rwanda launches Kigali Innovation City and signs partnerships with Ericsson, MasterCard, and Government of Jersey

The Government of Rwanda launched Kigali Innovation City, a dynamic ecosystem of technology clusters in which domestic and ICT companies will innovate and deliver products and services for global markets; and signed partnerships with Ericsson, MasterCard and the Government of Jersey.

Speaking at a Press Conference to launch the initiative on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on Africa taking place in Kigali, Rwanda Development Board's Chief Executive Officer Francis Gatare explained that Kigali Innovation City is the Rwandan solution to Africa's development meant to enable technology innovation communities by allowing them to source highly skilled human capital locally.

"The project was conceived to enable the digital transformation path in Rwanda. It is a model that can be easily applied across the continent to leapfrog into the Fourth Industrial Revolution," said CEO Gatare who is also a Cabinet Member.

The Kigali Innovation City Model is structure on three interdependent platforms:

- Human Capital
- Innovation friendly financial capital and
- Digital Innovation

The Government also signed partnership deals with Ericsson, MasterCard and the Government of Jersey.

Announcing collaboration with MasterCard to fast-track the country's move to include 90 per cent of its citizens in the financial mainstream, RDB's CEO Gatare and MasterCard President for Africa and the Middle East Raghu Malhotra revealed that Rwanda has committed to promote cashless economy.

The above-mentioned move will be achieved through digitalising school fees and national healthcare payments; providing an online payment gateway for Rwanda Online; contributing to the creation of a common mobile banking platform; and contributing to the effective management of spending activities across borders.

The Government of Rwanda also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Government of Jersey, one of the world's leading international finance centres.

"This MoU makes reference to areas of expertise where our two governments can benefit from each other's experience in fields as diverse as financial services, governance, conservation, digital technologies and agriculture. We look forward to working with colleague in Jersey in the years ahead as Rwanda continues its transition to a knowledge based, middle income economy," said Rwanda's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Claver Gatete who signed the MoU on behalf of the Government of Rwanda.

Minister Gatete also represented the Government of Rwanda at the signing of a breakthrough agreement for the launch of a national interoperability switch that will connect financial and payment services providers within the country and enable end-users to enjoy, in real-time, a range of digital payments possibilities across all financial platforms.



We need to do more and ensure sustainability of what we have achieved – President Kagame tells Karongi residents

President Paul Kagame has encouraged Rwandans to always strive to do more and ensure sustainability of what the country has achieved in the last two decades. The President was on 18 May 2016 addressing thousands of residents from across Karongi District, Western Province. The Head of State stressed that Rwanda's achievements may be impressive to some people around the world, but a lot still needs to be done to attain the level of development that Rwandans want and deserve.



President Kagame further reiterated that to reach sustainable development; one needs a mind-set change to work harder, smarter and faster. "Achieving development has to begin with changing our mind-set and working harder and faster towards achieving this goal," President Kagame said. The President noted that without security and stability, working and earning a living would be impossible. "Security and stability are the foundation of our development. We should not allow anyone to set us back. We have no room for that. We can only move forward," the Head of State said.

Prior to meeting with Karongi residents, President Kagame had on Monday launched KivuWatt Methane Gas Power Plant, a project generating 26 Megawatts to boost the country's energy production capacity. Later on Monday evening, the President interacted with opinion leaders from across Western Province. He encouraged them to promote the Made in Rwanda campaign and convince citizens to not always rely on second-hand clothes and other materials towards ending "the culture of accepting leftovers." "Let us build industries that can supply our markets. What we are asking is not impossible. It is within our abilities. How can we produce computers and fail to produce clothes?" President Kagame said. He called on the private sector to contribute to producing more goods locally to satisfy market demand.

Karongi District has a population of 331,000 people whose main activities include farming where they grow mainly bananas. Recent statistics show that extreme poverty has significantly reduced in the District, from 39 per cent in 2011 to 21 per cent today. With only 15 per cent of households connected to electricity in Karongi, President Kagame pledged that the Government will put more efforts in ensuring that even the rest get connected in the nearest future. Situated on the shores of Lake Kivu, the District boasts many tourist attractions. Efforts are underway to ensure professional fish-farming in the area.

President Kagame endorses AfDB's New Deal on Energy for investment in electricity delivery to all Africans by 2025

President Kagame was in Lusaka, Zambia to attend the formal opening of the Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank themed "Energy and climate Change".

President Kagame also joined President Uhuru Kenyatta and AfDB President Dr. Adesina Akinwumi on a CNBC televised panel "Path to universal access to energy in Africa" on the sidelines of the 51st Annual Meetings.

"The approach to energy for us has been the right mix of off and on grid power for industries. The energy mix will be dictated by our needs and resources. We are tired of poverty and a bad environment and one way to deal with these two issues is to invest in industrialisation. As leaders, we are committed to finding ways of accelerating the progress already being made. There is new momentum, we are beginning to move with a sense of urgency as a continent. Let's continue to fix our problems and also allow our citizens to have electricity." President Kagame told participants.

"We need to deal with the issue of outages. Let's not deviate - we need to improve our central infrastructure, transmission. We need to stop theorising but put in place practical and tangible solutions." President Kenyatta added.



Held over five days, the summit brought together over 2,500 participants including Heads of state and stakeholders to discuss how to tackle severe energy deficit in the continent where 650 million people don't have access to electricity.

Heads of State and Government at the summit included Presidents Edgar Lungu of Zambia, Idriss Deby of Chad and Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya. Nigeria Vice-President of Nigeria Yemi Osinbajo, Prime Ministers of Tanzania and Mozambique – Kassim Majaliwa and Carlos Agostinho do Rosário respectively.

Other high-profile attendees include Akon, Kofi Annan, Aliko Dangote, Ashish Thakkar, John Kufuor, Mary Robinson, Mo Ibrahim, Nancy Lee, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Tony Elumelu, among others.

KivuWatt to double Rwanda's energy production by 2020

On 16 May President Paul Kagame unveiled KivuWatt Power Plant, a methane gas power plant on the shores of Lake Kivu located in Karongi District, Western Province. The plant, a gas extraction and power generating facility, effectively adds 26 Megawatts to the national electricity grid in an effort to increase the country's energy production capacity which now stands at 186 Megawatts. By tapping the indigenous methane in the lake's deep waters to provide low cost fuel for electricity generation, the Project plays a significant role in raising the electrification rate above 24 per cent.



Officiating at the inauguration of the plant, President Kagame said that KivuWatt Power Plant is an example of what Rwanda stands for: an unwavering spirit.

"We keep trying until we succeed. What is important for me is not these plants or their location, but the electricity that is coming from them. To our neighbours and friends, if you wish to take the plant to scale to serve both Rwanda and DRC, you are most welcome," the Head of State said. The President further added that the 26 Megawatts is a very important and positive step, an indication of what is possible in addressing the energy-related challenges that the country faces.

The above is in accordance with a concession agreement with the Government of Rwanda and a power purchase agreement with Rwanda Energy Group. Phase II of the project will consist of three additional GEFs and approximately 75 Megawatts of new capacity at the existing site.

KivuWatt is the only gas/water extraction project currently operating in the world. It is managed by ContourGlobal, an American energy firm that was given a 25-year concession to produce 100 Megawatts from Lake Kivu.

The Project is financed by the African Development Bank, Netherlands Development Finance Company, Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund, and the Belgian Investment Company.

Young generation advised to change mind-set on agribusiness as 'Youth in Agribusiness Forum' is launched

On 4 May the Government of Rwanda launched the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF), an initiative meant to drive efforts towards changing the young generation's mind-set on the agriculture sector, while reaching out to other farming groups for awareness on agribusiness.

The Forum will be organised under a structure to be formed among youth themselves. A Government Advisory Committee led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (Minagri) will assist the forum by facilitating interactions with other partners.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister of Youth and ICT, Jean Philbert Nsengimana said that mind-set is among the key factors holding back the young generation from engaging in agriculture-related businesses. "We have realized that the biggest challenge in transforming agriculture into a business-driven and oriented sector is mind-set; especially among our youth. They consider agriculture as non-profitable business," Minister Nsengimana said. He noted that all other important aspects to make agribusiness a success are in place: skills, land, market and finances.



Minister Nsengimana further pointed out that the country has a big number of people with agribusiness expertise whom the Government wants to encourage to venture into the sector.

In her remarks, the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr. Geraldine Mukeshimana explained that RYAF will help turn the youth into 'change agents' for agricultural transformation thus making a huge impact in job creation and poverty reduction towards fast-tracking the country's economic transformation.

"It is now time to bring on board a new, innovative and enterprising cohort of our society to lead agriculture transformation in Rwanda – the youth," Minister Mukeshimana remarked.

Minister Mukeshimana called on the youth to adequately utilize the technical and financial support that has been availed by the Government through Minagri and development partners.

Agriculture is one of the key drivers of Rwanda's economic transformation. The sector employs more than 70 per cent of the population.

Launch of Girls' Lounge Africa Initiative

On 11 May 2016 Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Louise Mushikiwabo, gave a keynote address at the launch of Girls' Lounge Africa Initiative that was held at Hotel Milles Collines in Kigali on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on Africa. Minister Mushikiwabo was joining the event to speak about the economics of equality.



The event was in eye-opening discussions, and brought together seasoned women who shared their stories and advice with young girls just beginning to find their confidence.

Minister Mushikiwabo who emphasized most on the power of connecting and being ourselves, encouraged young women to be bold, to know what they want and go for it. She said: "What is good is usually not easy, but once we know where we are going, we have to go in that direction and we should be looking for all ways we can get there. One thing that is really important especially for our young sisters: pick what you want, go that direction and stay the course."

But also, Minister Mushikiwabo said that young women should appreciate the fact even though the decisions to make are difficult, at least they do have choices, which is not usually the case for everyone. "You will have to make very difficult decisions, but when you make those difficult decisions you should be grateful that you have choices. So we should be fulfilled and grateful that within in such complicated world not everybody has the luxury of choice, to appreciate that we have choices; that we have people to turn to, that we can ask for advice. It's a very unpredictable world and not always a kind world but there are many opportunities and many good people".

The Girls' Lounge is a one-of-a-kind destination for women to connect, collaborate and empower each other. It is an environment that fosters new ideas and sparks action around diversity and leadership while creating a new culture for tomorrow's leaders. We believe the more we advocate for one another and embrace what makes women different – the better business and life will become.

It supports and mentors women to help them stand out with their unique leadership powers and transform corporate culture together.

Participation of private sector is vital in responsible investment in fragile contexts

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Louise Mushikiwabo, has said that the participation of private sector is vital in responsible investment in fragile contexts. Minister Mushikiwabo was addressing a session on "Responsible Investment in Fragile Contexts" on the sideline of the World Economic Forum on Africa held in Kigali, Rwanda. Minister Mushikiwabo and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, co-hosted this session as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Global Agenda Council on Fragility, Violence and Conflict.

During this interactive session, Minister Mushikiwabo evoked the experience of Rwanda right after the Genocide of 1994, how the private sector played a major role in helping the government get back on track and start to function. She gave an example of how the first money that allowed the government of Rwanda to open a few Embassies came from the private sector. Minister Mushikiwabo added that there is a need to engage more both private sector and government and create a dynamic of having business participate in bringing countries back on track.



Minister Mushikiwabo further emphasized on this, saying that in post conflict situation, the participation of the private sector is very important: «We are convinced that the participation of private sector is critical to help these societies and countries functioning post conflict and help create a sort of normal situation in these countries. Companies should be investing in vulnerable environment and be part of the reconstruction process".

During this interactive session, Minister Mushikiwabo shared the journey of Rwanda, as a country that has undergone a significant transformation in the past decade. Minister Mushikiwabo also evoked what made possible for Rwanda to be trusted by investors: "Security and the fight against corruption have been vital in creating the right conditions for responsible investment in Rwanda".

The "Responsible Investment in Fragile Contexts" Report was officially launched at this event. This report profiles the experiences of a number of companies that operate in fragile, conflict-affected and violent contexts, drawing lessons that increase understanding of both the challenges and the opportunities for the private sector to bolster resilience and stability.

REMARKABLE RWANDA ATTAINS IMPROVED INTERNATIONAL MICE RANKING, AMONG TOP 10 IN AFRICA

Remarkable Rwanda is quickly climbing the ladder of popular Meetings Incentives Conferences and Events (MICE) destinations in Africa. Rwanda Convention Bureau (RCB) announced that Rwanda is now ranked 7th in Africa according to the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) 2015 report released today.

Commenting on the report, the head of Rwanda Convention Bureau, Frank Murangwa said “We are proud of Rwanda’s entry into the Top 10 host countries for major events in Africa.” Having just hosted the World Economic Forum on Africa for the first time, Rwanda has clearly demonstrated its ability to deliver on a global stage. “As we are ramping up our MICE strategy, we look forward to attracting many more large-scale events and climbing further up the ICCA rankings”, Murangwa added.

Every year ICCA gathers data from 1,000 member companies and organizations from 90 countries worldwide and produces a report ranking meetings held on a regular basis with over 50 delegates and rotating between at least three countries.



In 2015 Rwanda hosted 13 association meetings and a total of 27 major conferences and events: highlights include the 84th Interpol General Assembly with 1,000 delegates, the Transform Africa Summit (1,500 delegates) and the Seventh East African Petroleum Conference & Exhibition 2015 (EAPCE’15) that attracted 700 delegates.

2016 kicked off in high gear for Rwanda with the African Nations Championship that welcomed over 15,000 visitors and last week’s successful World Economic Forum on Africa with an estimated 2,500 delegates. Also scheduled this year are the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa in June with an expected 1,500 delegates, the African Union Summit in July (3,500 delegates), the Global Africa Investment Summit in September (1,000 delegates), Apie Expo in September, (1,000 delegates) and Africa Hotel Investment Forum in October (700 delegates) to name a few.

The Chief Tourism Officer of RDB, Ms. Belise Kariza underlined that Rwanda’s connectivity and security make the country an attractive place for conference organizers; open visa policies facilitate the flow of incoming visitors. The capital city Kigali is renowned for its cleanliness and business-friendly climate that have captured the heart of many reputable international brands in the hospitality and conferencing industry, among them Radisson Blu and Marriott hotels, Radisson by Park Inn, Zinc and others.

As a recent member of ICCA RCB has enjoyed much success climbing the Top 100 Global ranking from #114 in 2013 to #78 in 2015. According to ICCA internationally rotating association meetings are increasing by 100% every 10 years, and has been consistently doing so for the last half century, with no signs of a slowdown. This is definitely great news for Rwanda!

More info: www.rwandaconventionbureau.rw

Letters of Credence presented to President of the Republic of Bulgaria

On May 10th 2016, H.E. Ambassador Jean Pierre Karabaranga, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia (Residence in The Hague) presented his Letters of Credence to His Excellency Rosen PLEVNELIEV, President of the Republic of Bulgaria in the President's Palace in Sofia, capital city of Bulgaria.



Rwanda in the media - Highlights

Rwanda, Netherlands pledge to strengthen bilateral ties

Rwanda and the Kingdom of The Netherlands will continue to strengthen bilateral ties on various issues, officials from both countries have said.

They were speaking during celebrations to mark the Dutch King's Day at the ambassador's residence in Nyarutarama, a Kigali suburb.

The Dutch envoy to Rwanda, Fredrique de Man, said there is need for the two countries to further strengthen their cooperation on such issues as development support, trade and investment.

"We have a busy and ambitious shared agenda ahead of us and the main challenge lies in diversifying our relations. Further implementing the aid to trade policies that are the backbone of the Dutch development approach will, without any doubt, boost the Rwandan-Dutch partnership," the envoy said. [Read more.](#)

Dutch envoy commends Isange One Stop Center services

The Netherlands Ambassador to Rwanda Frédérique de Man yesterday praised Rwanda National Police (RNP) for its efficiency and professionalism in responding to gender-based violence (GBV).

She made the remarks during her visit at Isange One Stop Center yesterday where she was accompanied by the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion Dr Diane Gashumba, the Dutch ambassador to Sudan, Susan Bkenthaut, and the acting One UN Resident Coordinator, UN Women Deputy Country Representative Fatou A. Lo.

They were received by Superintendent of Police (SP) Shafiga Murebwayire, who presented them the work and progress of the initiatives to overcome GBV, including Isange One Stop Centre, which offers free medical-legal services to victims of GBV and child abuse as well as the daily activities of the anti-GBV directorate

"There is a lot that we can learn from this center, the Government of Netherlands is happy to be associated with Isange One Stop Centre – because all over the world, this initiative by Rwanda has been presented as a successful model in addressing and overcoming GBV challenges and advancing the rights of women and children. That is why we decided to continue partnering with Rwanda in this area and we are looking towards a brighter future where this model can be adopted by other countries," said Ambassador Man. [Read more.](#)

New digital fabrication lab to boost Made-in-Rwanda drive

Made-in-Rwanda, a campaign that was conceptualised to ensure locally produced commodities are given precedence over imports to help narrow trade deficit, is set to receive a huge boost. The boost has come in the form of Rwanda's first Digital Fabrication Lab (Fab Lab). Works to install equipment at the facility, which is hosted at Telecom House in Kigali, are ongoing with the assistance of personnel from the United States' Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The digital lab is set for launch on May 12. [Read more.](#)

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Rwanda in the media - Highlights

First Lady joins the graduation ceremony of 'Indatsindwa' at Green Hills Academy

First Lady Jeannette Kagame, a founding member of Green Hills Academy, joined the graduation ceremony of the Class of 2016 'Indatsindwa', on April 30, 2016. [Read more.](#)

Umuganda essential for economic development - Kagame

President Paul Kagame and First Lady Jeannette Kagame participated in the monthly community service (Umuganda) in Bwiza in Kayonza District, Eastern Province where they dug water trenches alongside hundreds of residents. Speaking to thousands of residents gathered for an interactive discussion that is an integral part of Umuganda, President Kagame pointed to the role of Umuganda in transforming lives: "Umuganda is about all of us joining hands and working together to develop ourselves. If we do not work together we will not move forward." [Read more.](#)

First Lady inspires girls in ICT as Ms Geek 2016 shines

The First Lady, Mrs Jeannette Kagame, encouraged the country's young women to aim higher, especially by advancing imaginative solutions in the field of ICT. The First Lady was speaking at the third edition of the annual Ms Geek 2016 Awards ceremony in Kigali, a ceremony in which five out of 130 Girls in ICT were awarded for innovative projects providing solutions to the community's challenges – ranging from health, agriculture, urbanisation necessities, to employment. [Read more.](#)

Karongi, Rwanda's beauty spot that is ripe for investment

Karongi (former Kibuye) is 139km or about 2 hours drive from the capital Kigali and 86km from Muhanga. The road Kigali to Karongi is in great condition and one can easily take a bus from Nyabugogo to Karongi, organise with a tour operator to be driven there, hire a car or simply drive themselves there in a private car. If driving from Rusizi, it is about 133km away but the drive is much slower due to the sharp corners on that road.

[Read more.](#)

Social progress will only rely on credible data, indicators - RDB chief

Rwanda will continue to rely on data and statistics that are accurate and reflecting the situation on the ground in the process of seeking social progress. Francis Gatere, the Rwanda Development Board chief executive, said this on Thursday while sharing the journey of the country's transformation at a social progress forum in Iceland dubbed, 'What works Today.' [Read more.](#)

RAB commits to close gender gap in agric sector

Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) and its stakeholders have committed to close gender gap in agriculture sector through expansion of innovation platforms. Innovation platforms that seek to foster interaction among stakeholders around a shared interest with a focus of gender equality were initiated in 2006. [Read more.](#)

Poverty eradication on agenda as Kagame tours Eastern Province

President Paul Kagame started a three-day tour of the Eastern Province where he's rallying citizens in the fight against poverty, encouraging them to work harder and smarter to increase both production and incomes they need to improve their lives. On the first leg of his tour, the Head of State met thousands of residents in Ngoma District at the playground of Teachers' Training College in Zaza (TTC-Zaza). He told the cheering crowd that he was in the area on a mission to talk to them about the need to fight poverty and improve lives, which he said will require both hard and smart work. [Read more.](#)

RSB, Eastern Africa Grain Council ink deal to enforce standards

Rwanda Standards Boards (RSB) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) to reinforce standards in commodity trade within the region. Dr Marc Cyubahiro Bagabe, the RSB director-general, said reinforcing grain standards will improve commodity value chain and promote interlinkages between grain stakeholders among the East African Community (EAC) partner states.

"The partnership will help upgrade value addition in this sector and bring in economies of scale. In Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda, warehousing standards are in place but there is a challenge of lack of warehouses that meet the requirements," Bagabe said after the signing in Kigali. [Read more.](#)

Nyaruguru to get new tea factory

The Government has signed an agreement with Unilever Tea Rwanda Limited to construct a tea processing factory and develop two large-scale tea sites in Nyaruguru District. The factory will produce black tea from green leaf while two new tea estates that will support small scale tea growers will be developed in Munini and Kibeho. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda in the media - Highlights

Body unveils plan to help promote professional accountancy in Rwanda

A new five-year strategic plan for Certified Public Accountants of Rwanda (ICPAR) has been unveiled as part of broader efforts to take professional accountancy in the country to the next level. [Read more.](#)

Agribusiness academy to promote farmers' entrepreneurial linkages

Members of agribusiness are set to see the sector improve through direct linkages between farmers, entrepreneurs, information and market linkage across the continent. This is an initiative of the Africa Agribusiness Academy (AAA), a Pan-African business platform for small and medium-sized agri-food enterprises. [Read more.](#)

Elephants to be reintroduced in Nyungwe National Park

Nyungwe National Park comprises a diversity of flora and fauna including chimpanzee, birds and plants. 16 years ago, the park had an elephant but poachers in 1999 trapped and killed the only elephant of this ecosystem. The Skelton of this killed elephant is kept in the museum of the forest as part of preservation of history that the elephant existed in the forest. [Read more.](#)

Kagame: Aid should allow for ownership by citizens

President Paul Kagame has said that development assistance and aid programmes should allow for ownership of solutions by citizens in order to have a longer term impact in development. The President was speaking at World Economic Forum on Africa. [Read more.](#)

First Lady challenges youth to defy status quo

First Lady Jeannette Kagame has urged the youth to defy the status quo by learning to step out of their comfort zones, and challenge the rules of the world's economic environment to create life changing opportunities for themselves and their communities, like Rwanda has done over the years to beat the worst odds. [Read more.](#)

Nepad launches new drive to promote intra-Africa trade

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), an agency of the African Union that implements high-impact development projects on the continent, has launched an initiative dubbed 'MoveAfrica' to help tackle policy hurdles to trade across the continent. [Read more.](#)

Paris Agreement driving Rwanda's renewable energy development

The Rwandan government's Paris Agreement Intended Nationally Determined Contributions commitment has been the driving force behind the establishment of up to 100 solar photovoltaic mini-grids in rural communities. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda wants to become an African hub for foreign direct investment

Import time has reduced by 14 per cent in Rwanda as a result of the removal of key non-tariff barriers (NTBS), according to a survey by TradeMark East Africa. [Read more.](#)

WEF Africa 2016 to focus on digital transformation

For the past 25 years, the World Economic Forum has made attempts to inform Africa's socio-economic affairs by convening yearly gatherings to discuss key aspects of the continent's transformation. Like it does in other parts of the world, the forum organisers curate the agenda and topics for discussion according to the economic trends and the region's ambitions. [Read more.](#)

A Successful Mindset Change: Entrepreneurs and BPN join forces

Located in one of the busiest places in the heart of Kigali city, Digitec Lab and Studios is your one stop shop for all your photography solutions. Right from taking a photo, editing, printing and finally getting the photo mounted onto a beautifully curved frame of your choice. [Read more.](#)

City of Kigali inks deal with Japan's Kobe city

The City of Kigali has signed a partnership agreement with Japanese city of Kobe to work together on ICT related issues, among other areas. [Read more.](#)

Young entrepreneurs create platform to market products

Young entrepreneurs in Rwanda and beyond have a chance to showcase and market their products and services during the World Economic Forum for Africa courtesy of an initiative dubbed, 'The African Village.' [Read more.](#)

Rwanda in the media - Highlights

Rwanda-Tanzania trade forum slated for May

A trade forum between Rwanda and Tanzania is scheduled to be held in Kigali next month as the two countries' business communities look to enhance ties. The May 20 forum aims to promote trade and investments, as well as bilateral partnerships between the business actors from the two East African Community (EAC) partner states, according to organizers. [Read more.](#)

They're growing fast: Heartwarming new photographs show progress twin gorillas born

16-year-old gorilla Isaro gave birth to twins at the beginning of the year in the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda. The adorable infants look healthier than ever nearly four months on and continue to show affection to their mother. [Read more.](#)

Graca Machel in Kigali, calls for women financial inclusion

Women from various corners of Africa and beyond have discussed ways of building capacities among themselves as a way of fostering their access to financial opportunities and reduce from the number of women who do not transact with banks from a staggering 70%. [Read more.](#)

Police in joint partnership to conserve Gishwati, Mukura forests

Rwanda National Police (RNP)'s Environmental Protection Unit (EPU), along with several other stakeholders have joined efforts in a new drive to sensitive people living along Gishwati and Mukura forests to stop and fight illegal mining activities and other environmental degradation activities in and around the reserves. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda lauded for entrepreneurial reforms

From 6-7th May 2016, Rwanda's Minister for Foreign Affairs Honorable Louise Mushikiwabo participated in the fourth edition of the Retreat of the Executive Council in Nairobi. The fourth Retreat of the Executive Council held at Radisson Hotel in Nairobi from 5-6 May 2016 was organized by the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of Kenya in preparation of the 27th African Union (AU) Summit to be held in Kigali from 10-18 July 2016, Rwanda. [Read more.](#)

How can Africa reposition itself for economic growth?

The current global economic slowdown should not be viewed in the context of whether Africa is rising or falling but rather as an opportunity to reposition the continent for a more inclusive, sustainable growth, delegates at a major conference in Kigali said. [Read more.](#)

African govts urged to open up borders to spur creativity

African governments must open up their borders to Africans if the continent is to realise its full potential, delegates attending the ongoing World Economic Forum on Africa, in Kigali. The call came from top economists and entrepreneurs who discussed the 'Africa Rising' narrative on Day I of the three-day gathering. [Read more.](#)

Rwandan firm starts Africa's first video streaming platform

Rwandan artists and content developers now have a new avenue to showcase and exhibit their work following the launch of Africa's first video streaming site. The platform, www.journal.rw, developed and run by Innovation Village, a Rwanda-based creative firm, provides an avenue to share high definition video. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda steps up He4She campaign

Minister Gashumba urged Rwandans to sign up for the HeForShe, the global campaign for gender equality initiated by UN Women, whose goal is to engage men and boys as agents of change for the achievement of gender equality. [Read more.](#)

How Rwanda Turned a Toxic Menace Into a Source of Power

President Paul Kagame has officially opened a new facility that draws energy from methane trapped deep underwater.

Lake Kivu, straddling the borders of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, offers a landscape of extraordinary beauty, framed by towering volcanoes and lush green slopes rich with tea, coffee and banana plantations. But deep beneath the surface of the lake lurks a terrifying menace: waters saturated with methane, carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide gas. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda in the media - Highlights

Kagame: New methane plant brings hope to addressing energy challenges

President Paul Kagame yesterday inaugurated the Kivu-Watt Gas Power Plant located in the Western Province's Karongi District, describing it as a sign of what is possible for efforts to address energy challenges in the country. [Read more.](#)

Reflections From Rwanda: Investing In One of the World's Fastest-Growing Economies

Last year, Rwanda exported roughly 12,000 metric tons of Arabica coffee. These high-quality, award-winning beans, once unknown, are now enjoyed in cafés around the world, including a Rwandan-owned specialty coffee shop just up the street from my home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda announces its new development model.

Rwanda is contemplating going back to the drawing board to adjust its development policies to a smarter and greener development model. The new model will be formulated in a way that, as the country pursues development, it consumes less energy while keeping the environment unharmed. Rwanda's Minister of Natural resources Dr. Vincent Biruta has explained this new paradigm shift will see Rwanda drift from a Linear Economic model to a Circular Economic model. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda gets green light to prepare plan to sustainably enhance its forest resources

With support from the African Development Bank (AfDB), Rwanda has won approval of a US \$250,000 grant under the Climate Investment Funds' Forest Investment Program (CIF FIP) to prepare its national-level FIP Investment Plan (IP). [Read more.](#)

5 ways Rwanda is leading on green growth

As a country that aspires to rapid economic growth, Rwanda has set a broad and inclusive national target, known as Vision 2020. The idea is to bring all Rwandans into the country's development journey, integrating green growth and climate resilience strategies. [Read more.](#)

Call for de-colonising of minds as Rwanda marks African Liberation Day

De-colonisation of the mind is what Africans need to fully liberate themselves. This was observed by different experts during the celebration of African Liberation Day (ALD), which in Rwanda was marked at the headquarters of the University of Rwanda in Gikondo. [Read more.](#)

Kagame, Kenyatta endorse new AfDB energy deal

President Paul Kagame and his Kenyan counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta have endorsed the 'New Deal on Energy', a vehicle through which the African Development Bank (AfDB) will invest in delivering electricity for all Africans, by 2025. Both Kagame and Kenyatta were speaking on a live CNBC-Africa television debate that also featured AfDB president Dr Akinwumi Adesina, yesterday afternoon, on the sidelines of the 51st AfDB Annual Meeting ongoing in Lusaka, Zambia. [Read more.](#)

Kigali introduces car-free day

Come Sunday, no cars will be allowed along the route connecting the Car-Free Zone to city roundabout in the Central Business District through—Sopetrad—Kimihurura—Gishushu to Stade Amahoro, the City of Kigali announced yesterday. The affected route is KN4 Avenue—KN3 Road—KN5 Road—KG11 Avenue—KG17 Avenue. But alternative roads connecting to and from the city centre will remain open for motorists. [Read more.](#)

How local innovation facilitated logistics for WEF delegates in Kigali

During the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Africa, which saw Rwanda host over 1,500 delegates, a fortnight ago, one of the most complex tasks was to facilitate the logistics of all the guests arriving in the country. [Read more.](#)

Sculptures: Kigali's untapped architectural beauty

Big or small, sculptures are one of the elements that make up public art illuminating intense scenic beauty or highlighting a social theme. Their shapes often reflect the creativity and craftsmanship of the artist which is mostly intended to captivate people's attention or raise various emotions. [Read more.](#)

First Lady helps fundraise for first cardiac centre in Rwanda

First Lady Jeannette Kagame joined the fundraising gala by Team Heart, for the first cardiac centre in Rwanda, an event that was held on Thursday night in Boston, USA. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda in the media - Highlights

Rwanda to host major health meet next month

An international conference on Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) is set to be hosted in Kigali next month. According to Major Jean Damascene Gasherebuka, the chairperson of the Rwanda Allied Health Professions Council (RAHPC), the conference will take place from June 28 to 30, and will attract over 500 participants from various countries worldwide. The conference will be held under the theme: "The role of multi-disciplinary approach in the management of NCDs in Africa." [Read more.](#)

World City Planners Want Kigali to Host MetroLab Headquarters

Global experts on city planning have today proposed that Rwanda's Capital, Kigali should host the regional Metrolab headquarters. The experts are holding their 7th session also called Metropolitan Strategic Planning Laboratory (MetroLab) in Kigali, in partnership with the World Bank Group. [Read more.](#)

Kagame Promises Massive Electricity Roll-out in Karongi District

Rwandans are expected to begin benefiting from a growing economy which has expanded in the last five years. "We want to ensure everyone gets access to electricity...and this is possible. Proof is the production of methane gas from Lake Kivu which we witnessed yesterday," President Paul Kagame told thousands of residents who had gathered to meet him at Mubuga sector in Karongi district. [Read more.](#)

We can deliver energy to our people-Kagame

President Paul Kagame has requested African leaders to strive for Africa's progress and extricate citizens from categories of most vulnerable people of the World. Reports of various organizations place Africa among world continents with most vulnerable citizens. President Kagame said that Rwanda has implemented a number of energy projects including dam constructions, methane gas extraction and conversion of insolation into solar energy. [Read more.](#)

Rwanda and Microsoft's partnership to transform education

Rwanda has entered into a partnership with a global information technology giant, Microsoft, which will see the country's learning systems transforming. Warren Lafleur, Head of Education West, East & Central Africa at Microsoft, told CNBC Africa, that the choice of country was dependent on a couple of things such as leadership and strategic direction a country was taking. [Read more.](#)

Sweden court sentences man to life in prison for role in Rwanda genocide

A Swedish court sentenced a man to life in prison on Monday for taking part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide [BBC backgrounder]. The Stockholm District Court [official website] determined that Claver Berinkindi was guilty of genocide and gross crime under international law consisting of murder, kidnapping and attempted murder. [Read more](#)

Rwanda Turns To Online Processing Of Land Titles

Rwanda has digitalized processing for land titles significantly reducing the period from two months to only five working days. The country is making it possible for every land transaction to be conducted online as a way of wiping out queues at administrative offices and banks and also saving time. [Read more](#)

Rwandan firm starts Africa's first video streaming platform

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Rwanda among top 10 investments destinations in Africa – survey

Rwanda is one of the 10 most attractive nations in Africa for investors, according to the 2016 Ernst & Young (EY) Africa Attractiveness Index. The country was ranked ninth and the second most preferred investment destination in East Africa after Kenya, which came fourth on the continental ranking and first in the region. [Read more](#)