

2016

RWANDAFUL
The Hague

Annual
Roundup of
Rwanda's
Stories

**SPECIAL EDITION ON THE
OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY**



*EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
The Hague*

www.netherlands.embassy.gov.rw

“ The question you have to ponder is simply this: How does a society hope to transform itself if it shoots itself in the foot by squandering more than half of its capital investment? The truth of the matter is that societies that recognize the real and untapped socioeconomic, cultural, and political power of women thrive. Those that refuse to value and leverage women’s talent, energies, and unique skills remain developmental misfits. It is not difficult to demonstrate this with a growing body of evidence.”

H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

The long journey

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi left the country shattered. Women took up new roles as heads of households, and engage in rebuilding the country along with others. Rwanda recognized that recovery and development would only succeed with women playing a central role. Today, 52 per cent of Rwanda’s population of 10.5 million are women. Gender equality and women’s empowerment is a cornerstone of the Government of Rwanda’s development strategy, and a proven source of development progress.

The greatest achievement since BPfA has been taking the women of Rwanda from being desperate victims to leading actors in the reconstruction of the country.

Rwanda’s achievements in gender equality and women empowerment have been made possible by a strong political will from the highest level.

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION MAKING

Rwanda leads the world in terms of women's representation in Parliament, with 56.3% between 2008-2013 and from 2014 at 64%

Rwanda leads the world in female representation in parliament

30%

minimum quota for women representation in decision making organs

Female Parliamentarians

64%

Female Ministers

40%

Judiciary

40%

Provincial Governors

40%

District Councils

38%

Source: Rwanda Statistical Year book 2014

Women's participation in the nation's life has fast tracked the implementation of the 12 critical areas of Beijing putting Rwanda on the world record in the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Everyone wins when women are stakeholders in development: The case of Rwanda

On March 8th 2016, the World will celebrate International Women's Day under the theme **"Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality"** which is tailored to encourage men and women to act for positive change. Rwanda's celebrations will be under the theme, **"Step it up for Gender Equality," Strive for Women Empowerment."**

The International Women's day for Rwandans means a lot. For the last 22 years, Women have played an important role in Rwanda's recovery and reconstruction. It is not surprising that the remarkable rise of Rwanda's women over the years closely tracks the general upward trajectory of the country's development. The genocide decimated the Rwandan people, destroyed the nation's political and social structures, and after, women made up 70 percent of the population. Therefore, Rwanda's decision to focus on women's equality was not a matter of rights but of practicality. The Government demonstrated its goodwill towards women and gave them a stake in the rebuilding process by appointing them to different leadership positions. The women of Rwanda have shown, for the first time in history, what can happen when women are in the driver's seat of the economic development of a country.

In Rwanda, Female representation in the Rwandan parliament is 64 percent higher than anywhere else in the world. Rwanda ranked first among African countries achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals, no doubt that Rwandan women are the cornerstone for that progress.

For example, women began serving in the executive, legislative and judiciary arms of the government, and called on all women to play an

ever greater role to lead Rwanda's recovery. Rwandese women in different leadership positions played critical roles in mobilizing fellow women to live together and to find common solutions to their own problems and those of their country. The greatest achievement has been taking the women of Rwanda from being desperate victims to leading actors in the reconstruction of Rwanda. Since then, Rwandan women moved away from traditional roles and joined politics and businesses in unprecedented numbers making them stakeholders and true partners.

In that regard, Rwandan women seized the opportunity to turn catastrophe into an African success story. In doing so, they set an example that offers powerful lessons for other counties. They've stabilized the country, helping forge a more socially just, environmentally enlightened, and economically stable country and men and children have been the most beneficiaries of these efforts. Rwanda has registered significant achievements in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women ranging from; an enabling policy, legal and institutional framework, enhanced socio-economic and political participation and setting a global pace for equality between men and women

In Rwanda, there is overwhelming evidence that women are the driving force behind the success story of Rwanda with a combination of committed leadership at different levels and the willingness of the people. Rwanda in general has learnt that everyone wins when women are put on the forefront.

Kagame calls for inclusive policies for gender parity

The world needs inclusive policies that seek the contribution of everybody, including women, in order to attain global gender parity. The statement was made yesterday by President Paul Kagame while speaking on the last day of this year's World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland. "For years, there was a huge gap; it is our responsibility to close the gap," said Kagame who was a member of a high level panel that discussed how the world can end poverty through promoting gender parity.

The President extensively shared practical success stories from Rwanda where he noted that inclusive politics and favorable policies have seen women join men to take centre stage in the country's renaissance from the disastrous effects of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. "During the process of liberation and after the Genocide, the first thing to come to our mind was how do we bring everybody in the country to participate and be part of the change we want in the country. That means we had to bring in women as well. It is an issue of rights, it is everything that is right to do," said the President. "We thought our policies and politics needed to involve everybody but we were also aware women were a disadvantaged group in our society for many years for different reasons. One of our missions was to deal with that particular problem as well as benefit from it. Fifty two per cent of our population is women. To be thinking of a problem that affects everybody and keeping out fifty two per cent doesn't make sense".

On the panel with President Kagame to discuss gender parity were Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer, Unilever, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and Melinda Gates, Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "We mobilised the population to make sure women are significantly represented at every level. We started with 30 per cent and we went beyond. It is not just quota, it is encouraging women to be there themselves and make sure they participate," Kagame explained.

Kagame noted, Rwanda's inclusive policies had paid off with figures telling the rest of the story; women hold an unprecedented 64 percent of seats in parliament, for instance, one of the best ratios in the world.



New Faces New Voices Rwanda Chapter Launched

First Lady Jeannette Kagame along with Madam Graça Machel, former First Lady of South Africa, launched the Rwanda Chapter of the 'New Faces, New Voices' initiative, a Pan-African advocacy group, at the Kigali Serena Hotel.

The initiative which aims to expand the role and influence of African women in the financial sector, aims to lift one million Rwandan women out of poverty in the next five years, according to First Lady, Jeannette Kagame.

New Faces, New Voices Rwanda will work as a registered company limited by shares and will attract as many shareholders as possible. The Rwanda Chapter has set a target of raising around four million USD in two years from about three hundred thousand shareholders in the country to fund women's business projects.



Furthermore the groups' management will approach the government and other stakeholders for additional funds to gain between sixteen million to twenty million USD needed to facilitate women's access to financial services. "Rwanda is developing in many areas but there is still a gap in women's access to finance. There needs to be measures to change that. Women have money but we need to pool it together so that it can bring more money to them," Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Vice-Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda and the group's chairperson said.

In this light Madam Graça Machel, founder of the New Faces, New Voices movement, urged Rwandan women to take advantage of the conducive environment ensured by Rwanda's leadership and to fight for their place in the financial sector. "We want to be at the center of the attention of the financial sector," she said.

The New Faces, New Voices initiative engages key stakeholders in the financial sector in order to promote women's access to financial services and products. With its head office in South Africa, the organisation has chapters in fourteen countries, including Cameroon, Ivory Coast, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Promoting gender equality is integral part of national commitment—President Kagame



President Paul Kagame has said that promoting gender equality is an important part of Rwanda's commitment. The President, who was speaking at a gala dinner hosted by Unity Club to celebrate the International Women's Day, thanked Rwandan women for their role in the country's economic transformation.

"The theme of International Women's Day this year, Make It Happen is what Rwandans and especially Rwandan women have done and continue to do, every day. Promoting gender equality does not take place in isolation. It is an integral part of our national commitment. Any place, that does not make gender equality a priority, is probably getting other important things wrong too."

President Kagame further reiterated that Gender Based Violence will not be tolerated and those responsible will face justice and pay heavily for their deeds. He added that ending violence against women and girls is a moral duty, a legal obligation of everybody.

"Gender based violence will not be tolerated at all. Violence against women is not a Rwandan culture. We have a responsibility to apply the law to end it."

The President encouraged men and women to continue working together so that Rwandan children may have good families and a bright future.

"Men and women should both complement each other. We cannot lose our focus or determination, despite the encouraging results, that have been recorded in Rwanda. It is said that men are the head of families, but you must know that women are the heart of our families not assistants."

Unity Club is a Rwandan non-government organization made up of female spouses of former and current cabinet ministers as well as former and current women ministers. The club's mission is to harness unity and peace as a strong foundation on which to build sustainable national development.

Never doubt your ability to change things for the better - First Lady Jeannette Kagame tells girls

First Lady Jeannette Kagame called on girls to never doubt their ability to change things for the better. The First Lady addressed on Tuesday 20 October 2015 a panel on "Digital Inclusion for Women's Empowerment" at **Transform Africa Summit 2015**.

In her address, First Lady Jeannette Kagame emphasized that addressing the gender equality gap well before 2030 – the benchmark of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is as urgent as it is imperative. She pointed out that the biggest gap exists in the area of access to technology. The latter, she said, is a result of the high cost of broadband and a lag in reaching the targets with regard to getting girls into science and technology streams. The First Lady further challenged participants at the Summit to address the digital gender divide in the shortest time possible: "It is encouraging to note that the SDGs have made provisions in goals five and nine to end discrimination against women and girls; and to foster industry, innovation and infrastructure respectively."

To be able to achieve this bold development transformation in the area of gender and ICT, First Lady Jeannette Kagame noted, a conducive environment is required. An environment characterized by a leadership that believes in equality, inclusive national policies, and a population ready to take up and enjoy the benefits of inclusive digital policies. In Rwanda, the government has spared no efforts in bringing to the forefront the principles of gender equality and women empowerment. This has helped achieve parity, equality and opportunities for those who were historically seen as inferior and consequently denied access to education and ensuing professional opportunities.

"By promoting universal access to education, our country ensured that our girls would not be left behind, and would be able to become as competitive, as their male counterparts."

Currently at the secondary school level, Rwanda is registering over 50% of girls in Science and Technology Engineering and Math Courses. "Girls, be bold, be curious and never doubt your own ability to change things for the better."

The First Lady gave an example of Chance Tubane who set up Tohoza.com, an online directory allowing over 5,000 visitors to search daily for employment, housing, or advertising opportunities.



Celebration of International Womens Day in the Netherlands

On 8 March 2015 the world celebrated International Women's Day. All around the world, International Women's Day represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

On Saturday 21 March the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in The Hague in cooperation with Ishema (the Rwanda Women Association) celebrated International Women's Day at the Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague where achievements of Rwandan and Dutch women were celebrated. This special day was celebrated together with guest of honour Mrs. Ingrid de Caluwe (MP for the VVD, leading party in the Dutch government), the diplomatic community, International Womens Contact in The Hague, the Rwandan diaspora and many Friends of Rwanda. In total more than 200 guests attended the event.

Ishema's mission is to encourage Rwandan women living in the Netherlands to actively play a role in the development of Rwanda. President of Ishema, Ms Christella Mukashema, informed the audience that every year International Women's day is celebrated in the Netherlands, which gives the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and set new goals to broaden their network. In Rwanda, the International Women's day was celebrated under the theme "Let's strengthen performance contracts in development".

The program of the celebration offered an interesting mix of cultural music and dance performances and speeches from honourable speakers, amongst others Mrs. Barbara Couwenberg from the International Womens Contact in The Hague and the Ambassador of Nigeria (Dean of African Ambassadors).

H.E. Jean Pierre Karabaranga, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Netherlands, said in this speech that Rwanda has made substantial progress towards gender empowerment, most notably with the achievement of 64 per cent female representation in parliament, ranking Rwanda the first in the world in terms of female representation. There are similarly high levels of female representation at all levels of government and these achievements are supported by strong institutional measures, including policy and budgetary commitments in connection to the Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) process that seeks to bring gender equality into the mainstream of government policy-making.

The Ambassador quoted H.E. President Kagame who said that gender equality and women's empowerment is a cornerstone of the Government of Rwanda's development strategy, and a proven source of development progress.

Rwanda is becoming day by day one of the best places to be and live as a woman and girl in the world, said Ambassador Karabaranga and he concluded his speech and invited all guests to unite our call to create a better world in which every woman is treated with respect and dignity, every boy and girl is loved and cared equally, and every family has the hope of a strong, stable and a better future.



Rwandan girls should take up studies and careers in ICT – Minister Nsengimana



The Minister of Youth and ICT, Jean Philibert Nsengimana, has called on Rwandan girls to take up studies and careers in ICT as these offer a chance for them to enhance their skills and tackle unemployment challenges.

Minister Nsengimana made the call yesterday in a discussion on YouthConnekt Hangout about the International Girls in ICT Day slated to be celebrated on Saturday 25 April 2015 with the conclusion of the Ms. Geek Competition – an annual competition in which young women, mostly university students, compete based on their innovative ideas as well as their ability to develop a certain technology or business idea based on a given problem statement and challenge reflecting issues faced by Rwandans today.

The Minister stressed that the youth need to focus on their goals by owning their passion, vision and determination which – in the end – will bring partners to support their initiatives.

“It is very important for young girls and women globally, more especially in Rwanda, to take up studies and careers in ICT. Our country is on the move, we are busy transforming our economy from agricultural base economy to a knowledge-driven economy. ICT happen to be the engine of that transformation.”

He further added that embracing ICTs opens doors to new opportunities: new jobs, new careers, new markets, and new connections. “Let’s encourage Rwandan girls to join ICT in big numbers. We have to keep spreading the word about the opportunities available in ICT.”

The President of Girls in ICT Rwanda, Lucy Mbabazi, remarked that “Technologies enable solutions. We want girls to know that they can use ICT to solve the different problems they face.”

During the Youth Connekt Hangout, the speakers encouraged the youth to keep improving their ICT innovations. “When your idea (ICT project) is viable, you get sponsorship and your business is likely to be overly productive, and therefore you will be enhancing your community’s welfare,” one of the speakers pointed out.

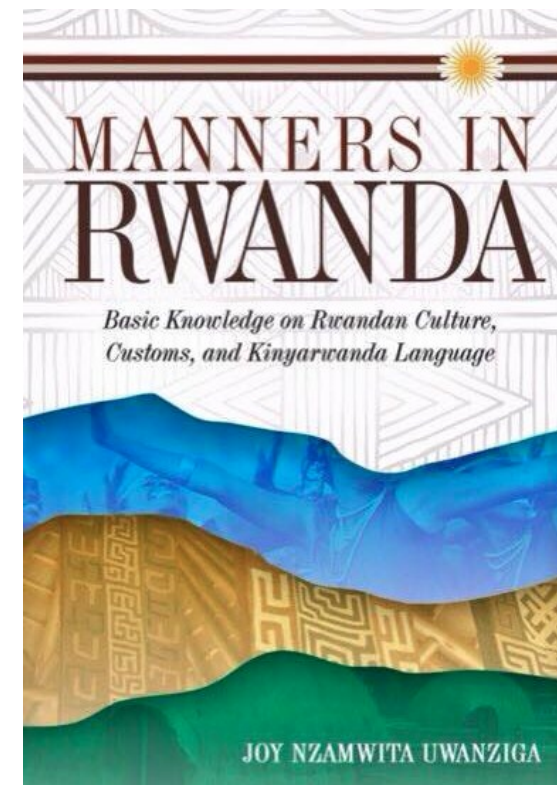
YouthConnekt is a platform that serves as a channel for the youth, private sector, and government to discuss solutions to address issues facing the youth, specifically those pertaining to employment and entrepreneurship.

Book: Manners in Rwanda—Basic Knowledge on Rwandan Culture, Customs, and Kinyarwanda Language

If you have ever visited the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in The Hague, then you know that the first person who welcomes you is our receptionist Ms Joy Uwanziga. Did you know that we are very proud because she wrote a book that was recently launched?

The book is called 'Manners in Rwanda: Basic Knowledge on Rwandan Culture, Customs, and Kinyarwanda Language' and is a must-have for everyone interested in Rwanda.

Buy it now at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and in the Netherlands at: www.bol.com



Rural women play significant role in the country's economic growth

On Saturday 24 October 2015, Rwandans gathered in the different corners of the country to celebrate the International Day of Rural Women. The celebration was marked by a Special Community Work 'Umuganda' to pay tribute to the rural women's contribution to the country's economic growth.

Themed "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!" the day was an occasion for Rwandans to rethink the place given to rural women in communities nationwide.



The Special Umuganda was an opportunity to reiterate the call to join in the fight against malnutrition through increased and diversified agricultural productivity, promote the culture of sanitation, and rebuild houses for vulnerable women in rural areas.

The Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Oda Gasinzigwa, challenged Rwandan women to put more efforts in boosting the country's economic growth not only through agricultural activities, but also by investing in other forms of income generating activities.

"When we talk about national development, we should link it to rural women. About 80% of women are farmers and live in rural areas. This shows how rural women contribute significantly to the nation's economic growth. We encourage them to embrace other economic activities apart from agriculture. This will help boost their economic status."

The Government of Rwanda is recognized globally to have done a lot in promoting gender equity and women empowerment: a minimum quota of 30% of women in decision-making positions is observed across public institutions; men and women enjoy equal rights to land titles; girls and boys, men and women are entitled to equal inheritance on their parents/guardians property; etc.

Celebrated globally, the International Day of Rural Women is an occasion to recognize the role of the rural women in enhancing agricultural productivity.

First Lady inspires school girls in Parliament

On 20 June First Lady Jeannette Kagame urged girls to get informed, inspired and involved so as to be good leaders and citizens. Mrs. Kagame said this while addressing 250 girls participating in a one-day youth forum organized by Imbuto Foundation at Parliament. She emphasized the desire to have well-informed Rwandan youth who can bring about positive change, in addition to being able to favourably compete on the international job market and in so doing, reach their limitless potential.

The event was part of the now regular Youth Forum Series (YFS) that bring together segments of youth and features exceptional speakers on topics ranging from professionalism, entrepreneurship, communication, and economic self-reliance. In the latest forum themed: "Informed. Inspired. Involved," the First Lady said, it was important to inform the young girls how the Parliament operates at an early age.

"We think this program will enhance the manner in which they express their views, as well as sharpen their critical thinking," the First Lady said. "You are not too young to learn how the Rwandan parliament functions," she told them. "This is the beginning because it is the first time we are conducting such a forum but we are planning that this program can be extended to other youths".

Shortly afterwards, the girls – mostly 14 to 18-year olds – put into practice what they learned. They elected their own parliamentary Speaker and her deputies, divided themselves into the usual parliamentary committees and went ahead to scrutinize pieces of legislation, as is done in a real parliamentary setting.

Fawe Girls School's Diana Nshuti, 18, is already thinking way beyond her dream to become a doctor. "I appreciate many things about this event. The theme today, 'Informed. Inspired. Involved,' is what inspired me most. I have got to be the best of what I can be or achieve. I am now studying physics, chemistry and biology, meaning I am aspiring to be a doctor in future," Nshuti told. "But I also have other goals too. I have this ambition to one day set up a company that takes care of street kids. A company that has people with specialized skills to mentor street kids by using better methods."

The Youth Forum Series (YFS) also create opportunities to unleash young talent in different ways. Over 20 forums have been held since 2007 with a number of themes including: 'Ingredients of Success' for university students, and '15 Years and the re-birth of a future generation' for young genocide survivors.

Also in attendance were the Speaker of Parliament, Mukabalisa Donatille and the Minister of Sports and Culture, Uwacu Julienne who closed the one day forum.

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Celebration of INTERNATIONAL RURAL WOMEN'S DAY, 2015

Every year on 15th October, Rwanda joins rest of the world to celebrate the International Rural Women day. Rwanda has been celebrating this day since 1997. The global theme states that: "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it". In Rwanda the event was celebrated under the theme: "Empowering women is empowering the family .make it a commitment ".



The celebrations of the International Rural Women's day were held at Umududgu level country-wide and at the National level took place on 17th October, 2015 in the Northern Province, in Gicumbi District, Rushaki Sector, Kamutura cell and in Nkamba Village.

The International Rural Women's Day in Rwanda focused on celebrating the achievements of women empowerment in the last 21 years. The celebrations equally advocated for continued women's advancement and tackled challenges faced by rural women while promoting their active role in sustainable development.

During this celebration ,the following key activities were focused on: Supporting vulnerable women (kuremera)

Awarding women who have accomplished outstanding activities with commendable impact on the community
Evaluating performance contract of "mutimawurugo" and planning further activities for the next year performance contract that will be evaluated during the International Women's day 8th March, 2016

Hon.Minister of Gender and Family Promotion who was the Guest of honor during th celebrations, highlighted that: "when we talk about national development we should link it to rural women as about 80% of women are farmers and are in rural areas .this means that rural women have a tremendous contribution towards the nation economic growth. However, we want them to embrace other economic activities apart from agriculture to boost their economic status". She also congratulated the rural women for their steps made in all sectors and called the rural women to actively participate in income generating activities towards empowering their communities and the nation at large, she emphasized that women need to take up all the advantage of the good leadership and all opportunities available to them by transforming their lives.



The Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in the Netherlands celebrated International Women's Day 2015 with guest of honor Mrs. Ingrid de Caluwe (Dutch Member of Parliament for the VVD-party) at the Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague.



Ambassador Jean Pierre Karabaranga visited Koffiebranderij Book in The Hague and owner Mrs Lianne Bertens informed that she just started to roast Rwanda coffee beans and sells this in her shop at the Prinsestraat 114. More information where you can buy your Rwandan coffee on www.koffiebranderijboon.nl



**EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
IN THE NETHERLANDS**

Invitation: **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 26 MARCH 2016**

Dear Madam,
Dear Sir,

The Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in Netherlands will be hosting an event to celebrate the International Women's Day. This is event will be an opportunity to showcase Rwanda's achievements in gender equality and women empowerment. Rwanda has made great strides in promoting gender equality driven by a strong commitment by the Government.

Increasingly, the International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made and to call for change, the reason why we will also take time to join the International Community in the global call to more effort to make the gender equality a reality.

It is in this regard that we invite you to join us on this Celebration to be held on Saturday, 26 March 2016, at Marriot Hotel, Johan de Wittlaan 30, 2517 JR The Hague, from 17:00 to 19:00.

Best regards,