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Rwanda

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Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Methodology and general consultative process.....	1	3
II. Country background and institutional framework.....	2–12	3
III. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground.....	13–64	5
A. Fight against genocide, right to life and to security	13–14	5
B. Right to health, to welfare and safe environment	15–20	6
C. Fight against discrimination.....	21	7
D. Freedom of expression and right of access to information	22–25	8
E. Freedom of association and freedom of religion	26–27	9
F. Right to education.....	28–30	9
G. Right to work	31–35	10
H. Right to social protection.....	36–40	11
I. Right to family life and to property	41–42	12
J. Right to culture	43–44	13
K. Right to justice.....	45–48	13
L. Rights of detainees.....	49–50	14
M. Women rights and children rights.....	51–55	15
N. Rights of persons with disabilities	56–58	16
O. Rights of asylum seekers, refugees and returnees.....	59–60	16
P. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms and with other partners	61–64	17
IV. Best practices, challenges and constraints.....	65–66	18
A. Best practices.....	65	18
B. Challenges and constraints.....	66	19
V. Key national priorities as identified by stakeholders, initiatives and commitments that the State concerned should undertake	67	19
VI. Expectations in terms of capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by stakeholders	68	20
VII. Conclusion	69–70	20

I. Methodology and general consultative process

1. This report is based on Resolution 5/1 of the Human Rights Council and the guidelines for the preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review. The preparation of the Rwandan UPR report was coordinated by the inter-institutional Task Force on Treaty Reporting (TFTR), composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Chair); the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Public Service and Labour; the Ministry of Internal Security; the Ministry of Local Administration and the National Commission of Human Rights. After the official launching of the UPR preparation process, followed by the training of the TFTR on the Universal Periodic Review, a questionnaire was prepared by the said Task Force and sent to various institutions to collect information on achievements in the field of human rights. The draft elaborated from collected information was discussed in different meetings with government institutions, the Parliament, the Judiciary, the UN System, Civil Society Organisations and even the general public through the National radio and National Television. Two broad validation workshops brought together all stakeholders involved in human rights issues. These workshops contributed greatly to the improvement of the Rwandan UPR report before it was submitted to the Cabinet for approval. The final version of the Rwandan UPR report was thereafter published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in English, French and Kinyarwanda.

II. Country background and institutional framework

2. Rwanda has a surface area of 26,338 km² with a population estimated at around 11 million inhabitants, composed of 51.7 per cent women and 48.3 per cent men. The population density is 395 inhabitants per km² while the physiological density is 556 inhabitants per km². The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita rose from 206 USD in 2002 to 541 U.S dollars in 2010. The economy is mainly based on agriculture which employs 85 per cent of the country's households yet contributing up to 37 per cent of the gross domestic product. The population increases by about 2.8 per cent annually and GDP increased by 11.2 per cent in 2008. Rwanda aspires to be a middle-income country by the year 2020. It is important to note that the Genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 negatively impacted the social fabric of the society as well as other social amenities such as infrastructure. It is at this backdrop that the Government of Rwanda embarked on a programme of rebuilding itself enhancing principles of rule of law, respect of human rights and bringing about national unity and reconciliation.

3. The Rwandan State is a sovereign, democratic, social and secular Republic, recognising the multi-party system of government. The three branches of government (the legislative, the executive and the judiciary) are separate and independent from one another, but are all complementary. In its preamble, the Rwandan constitution reaffirms the adherence to the principles of human rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as in the core international human rights instruments. The second chapter of the Rwandan Constitution, from article 10 to article 52, provides for the fundamental human rights (as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the duties of the citizen. Rwanda has effectively ratified all the eight key human rights instruments and most of their additional protocols. Many other international and regional human rights conventions were ratified by Rwanda or are in the process of ratification. Once ratified, all the treaties and conventions are integrated into domestic legal system. As per the Constitution, ratified treaties have precedence over domestic laws. Rwanda has withdrawn all its reservations on International human rights treaties. Rwanda is committed to submit periodic reports on the

implementation of key human rights treaties: all overdue reports have been prepared and submitted to Treaty Bodies in 2009 and 2010.

4. Rwanda has developed programmes that target socio-economic transformation. These programmes include Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS). The Vision 2020 strategy was developed to propel the kind of society that the country aspires to become by 2020 while the Economic Development for Poverty Reduction Strategy provides a framework for the country's long-term development aspirations as embodied in Rwanda's Vision 2020 and the Millennium Development Goals. The Country has also formulated several policies and programmes geared towards the promotion and protection of human rights enshrined in various sector policy papers. Apart from the general policy of human rights, which remains one of the key priorities, almost all other key policies in different sectors related to human rights (education, health, social protection, rights of women, rights of children, rights of people with disabilities...) were adopted.

5. All the three branches of Government play a key role in the promotion and the protection of human rights:

6. **The Parliament** has human rights committees (both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) which conduct investigations and research in relation to the respect of human rights. This has enabled parliamentarians to investigate the respect of human rights in local communities through working visits. Different Government authorities are often questioned by the Parliament on issues related to human rights. The Rwandan Parliament established mechanisms to further participate to the promotion of human rights, including the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Amani Forum which is actively involved in strengthening peace and security in the great lakes region.

7. **The National Commission for Human Rights** is an independent and permanent institution. It is in conformity with Paris Principles and has "A" status. It is composed of seven commissioners whom at least 30 per cent are women. Commissioners are appointed from different categories of the Rwandan society, including the civil society. Commissioners enjoy immunity in the process of execution of their duties. The Commission has a specific mission of educating and raising public awareness on human rights and providing guidance upon request or on its own initiative on bills related to human rights and engages State bodies to ratify international conventions related to human rights and take steps to domesticate these conventions in the national legislation. The Commission also investigates violations on human rights committed within the territory of the Republic of Rwanda by State organs, public officials abusing their powers, organizations and individuals. The Commission is empowered to launch cases before civil, commercial, labor and administrative courts in case of violation of human rights. Each year the Commission submits a report of its activities to the parliament and gives copies to the President of the Republic, the Cabinet and the Supreme Court. This report is an important tool for the Parliament to monitor the protection and promotion of human rights in Rwanda.

8. **The Office of the Ombudsman** is an independent public Institution established by the Constitution. It is responsible for acting as a link between the citizen, the public and private institutions; preventing and fighting against injustices, corruption and other related crimes in public and private administration; receiving and examining, in the aforementioned context, complaints from individuals and independent associations against the acts of public officials and private institutions and to mobilize these officials and institutions to find solutions to such complaints; as well as receiving declaration of assets of senior government officials and different other government officials with the aim to prevent the embezzlement of public funds.

9. **The Supreme Court** and other courts provided for by the Constitution exercise the judicial power. The courts play a role in the protection and promotion of human rights through fair and timely judgements. Judgments of the Supreme Court increasingly refer to international human rights treaties ratified by Rwanda. The Supreme Court regularly compiles these cases and avails them to courts for reference.

10. **The Public Prosecution Authority** also plays a key role in the protection and promotion of human rights, especially through its programs on tracking the Genocide fugitives, on the protection of witnesses and victims, on the fight against Gender Based Violence and on the fight against corruption and drugs. The Judiciary is independent from other powers and from undue influence of the Legislature and the Executive Branches of the Government.

11. Other equally important institutions in safeguarding human rights include: The Rwandan National Police, The National Electoral Commission, the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG), the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation, the National Labour Council, the Public Service Commission, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women Council, the Observatory of child rights, the Office of Auditor General of State Finances, the National Youth Council, the National Prison Service, the National Council for Persons with disabilities, etc.

12. The Rwandan Government is very effective and responsible in delivering good services to the people of Rwanda. Through the process of decentralization, authority, responsibility and service provision were transferred from the central Government to the local government and its administrative divisions. Rwanda is internationally recognised as a very secure country, characterised by its firm commitment on economic growth, but also on good governance and the zero tolerance on corruption. The President of the Republic, and the Government of Rwanda in general, have received many international Awards for different outstanding achievements for the development of the country and its population, including the African Gender Award (Senegal in 2007) and the global UNICEF Children's Award in 2009.

III. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

A. Fight against genocide, right to life and to security

13. Rwanda has ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Rwanda also played a key role for the adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, especially its Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, war Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and all forms of Discrimination. Rwanda has enacted several laws related to the fight against Genocide such as the law on the punishment of the crime of Genocide ideology and the law on the organization, competence and functioning of the courts, which contains provisions on prosecuting and trying the perpetrators of the crime of Genocide and other crimes against humanity. To ensure the monitoring of the implementation of these legal instruments, a National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) was established. The CNLG has adopted a number of preventive mechanisms against the spread of Genocide ideology, consisting in promoting public awareness, in fighting against revisionism, negation and trivialization of Genocide, etc. Other key activities of CNLG consist in sensitizing Genocide prisoners to provide information on the whereabouts of the victims; providing advocacy for the Genocide survivors, etc. CNLG is spearheading the creation of a national research, documentation and dissemination centre on Genocide, to be built at the Nyanza-Kicukiro memorial site in Kigali. CNLG works hand in hand with

different associations of Genocide survivors, including Ibuka (the umbrella association of Genocide survivors); AVEGA (*Association des Veuves du Genocide*), AERG (*Associations des Etudiants Rescapés du Genocide*) and AOCM (*Association des Orphelins Chefs de Ménages*). Every year from 7 to 13 April, a week of commemoration of the Genocide is organized.

14. The rights to life and to mental and physical integrity are guaranteed by the Constitution. Rwanda ratified key international instruments for the preservation of the human life and human dignity: the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the abolition of death penalty; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes and its additional protocols, the UN conventions related to the fight against terrorism, etc. The Penal Code punishes crimes that violate the right to life and to physical and mental integrity of persons: murder, extermination, forced disappearance of persons, torture, poisoning, assault and beating and other inhumane acts of a similar character. Death threats against persons are also punishable. Apart from the penal code, laws were adopted to prevent and fight against terrorism, money laundering and the trafficking of human beings, especially women and children. Different measures were adopted for the maintenance of security, including community policing, Emergency Toll Free Numbers used by the population to request police intervention and night patrols where appropriate. Rwanda is an active member of regional mechanisms for the maintenance of peace and security, including the East African Standby Brigade; the East African Police Cooperation Organization (EAPCO) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA). Because of all existing mechanisms for the maintenance of security, murders were reduced from 234 in 2005 to 144 in 2008.

B. Right to health, to welfare and safe environment

15. Rwanda has developed various sector policies that enable citizens to access health facilities, especially the Health Sector Policy (2005), the Policy governing the Standards of Health Services in Rwanda (2009), the National Policy for Community Health (2008), the National Policy to Fight against HIV/AIDS (2005), the National Policy on Condoms (2005), the National Nutrition Policy (2005), the Policy on Community-based Health Insurance (2004), the National Policy on Reproductive Health (2003), Environmental Health Policy determining conditions for school hygiene (2008) and the Policy on Water and Sanitation (2004). It is evident that these various policies have greatly contributed to the rise of the life expectancy from 49 years in 2002 to 52.7 years in 2007.

16. Several programs and initiatives targeting different groups of people (pregnant mothers, the new born and unborn children, couples intending to get married and many more) were initiated. These range from voluntary counseling and testing to prevention of mother to child transmission, among others. From 2003 to end 2009, all these programs and initiatives significantly benefitted 4,286,000 persons. HIV testing in VCT (Voluntary Counseling and Testing) services was also promoted. The HIV prevalence among tested persons reduced from 10.8 per cent in 2003 to 2.4 per cent in 2010. By the end of 2009, the number of pregnant women attending PMTCT (Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission) services was 71 per cent while the rate of HIV prevalence among them was 2.7 per cent. A total of 1,554,876 pregnant women were tested for HIV and 77.8 per cent of those found to be HIV positive, including 74.6 per cent of children born to HIV positive mothers, were put under ARV treatment.

17. The National Programme to Fight against Malaria has several strategies ranging from distribution of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) to children under five years and pregnant women, as well as the indoor residual spraying carried out in households. These

actions have contributed to significant reduction of the prevalence of malaria to 60 per cent. Children under five years sleeping under ITNs rose from 13 per cent in 2005 to 58 per cent in 2008 while the percentage of pregnant women sleeping in ITNs rose from 17 per cent to 62.3 per cent in the same period. A total of 4,053,756 ITNs were distributed by the end of 2009. The rate of morbidity due to malaria reduced from 64.7 per cent in 2003 to 14.8 per cent in 2009.

18. Several programmes are available for the promotion of maternal and child health. These programmes include family planning, antenatal care, community health care, delivering health facilities, Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EMONC), the construction and equipment of maternity wards, capacity building of the midwives, increase in the number and quality of health professionals and the introduction of community-based health insurance. Thanks to efficient family planning programme, the rate of the use of contraceptives raised from 10 per cent in 2005, to 45 per cent in 2009. Child delivery in health facilities increased from 28 per cent in 2005, to 66.2 per cent in 2009. Antenatal care is used at 96 per cent (at least one prenatal consultation). All these programmes significantly reduced the rate of infant mortality from 86 per cent per 1000 live births (1 year) in 2005 to 62 per cent per 1000 born children in 2008 and 152 per cent to 103 per cent per 1,000 for children below the age of five years.

19. The Ministry of Health is responsible for food safety in collaboration with the Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RBS). The nutrition policy was approved and the community-based nutrition programme will be adopted very soon. Through agencies like Rwanda Agriculture Development Agency (RADA) and Rwanda Animal Resources Development Agency (RARDA), the Government is in the process of implementing comprehensive reforms and has embarked on land consolidation so as to ensure a productive, high-value, market-orientated agricultural sector by 2020. This has led to exponential increase in harvest. The annual increase in the production of food crops increased from 1.8 per cent in 2004 to 16.4 per cent in 2008. The Action Aid's Annual Hunger report of 2010 places Rwanda on the 11th position among all developing countries, (six places better than last year's position), in the fight against hunger. The percentage of population with access to clean drinking water (within 500 meters in rural areas and 200 meters in urban areas) increased from 78 per cent in 2005 to 85 per cent in 2007.

20. The article 49 (1) of the Constitution stipulates that every citizen is entitled to a healthy and satisfying environment. This provision obliges the government to commit itself to ensure that citizens live in a safe and clean environment. To achieve this obligation, reforestation and terracing are emphasized on hilly areas to prevent soil erosion, while marshlands and low land vegetation are protected. Rwanda has ratified almost all international instruments related to the protection of environment. The government provides orientation through the national policy on environment and the national policy on water and sanitation. The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) takes the lead to regulate, safeguard and promote safe and clean environment protection programs.

C. Fight against discrimination

21. Rwanda ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol, the ILO Convention on discrimination in the employment profession and the UNESCO Convention on the Fight against Discrimination in the Education sector. The Rwandan Constitution contains provisions against discrimination and Rwanda has enacted laws on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including the law on Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Discrimination and Sectarianism and the law Punishing the Crime of Genocide, Crimes

against Humanity and War Crimes. Other laws like the Penal Code, the Labour Law, the Land Law, the Law on Matrimonial Regime, Succession and Gifts, as well as the law governing the General Statutes for Rwanda Public Service, contain provisions against discrimination. Different Institutions including the Parliament, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, *Itorero ry'Igihugu* (Institution for civic education), the National Commission of Human Rights, the National Commission of Demobilization and Reintegration, but also the Civil Society Organisations including churches, play a key role in sensitizing the Rwandan population against discrimination. Such sensitizations target mainly University students, teachers, civil servants, local leaders, demobilized soldiers but especially refugees and former rebels who escape from FDLR (*Forces Démocratiques de Liberation du Rwanda*) and are repatriated in Rwanda. Private research institutions also play a key role in the fight against discrimination in the Rwandan society; especially the *Institut Rwandais pour le Dialogue, la Paix et la Démocratie* (IRDP) and the Centre for Conflict Management (CMC) of the National University of Rwanda.

D. Freedom of expression and right of access to information

22. Freedom of expression is reflected in the increase of media outlets in the country. The number of newspapers rose from 15 in 2003 to 57 in 2010; from one national radio that existed in 1997, currently 19 radio stations are operating in the country. The national radio has established branches in all provinces to enable mass participation. More than 50 per cent of the adult Rwandan population own and use mobile phones for communication. It is noteworthy that some print media have evolved from weekly into dailies e.g. The New times and *Imvaho Nshya*. Some international radio stations have been licensed to operate on FM frequencies in Rwanda (These include BBC, DW, VoA) with their popular programmes in the national language. International newspapers enter freely the Rwandan market from neighbouring countries and even from American and European countries.

23. In facilitating the local media to publish their newspapers at low cost, the Government acquired a web machine with high capacity to locally print newspapers and other media products, thus reducing travel costs and associated expenses as most newspapers were printed in Kenya and Uganda. The Government has also been organising training programmes for journalists both abroad and inside the country. The School of Journalism has been established at the National University of Rwanda, and Journalism Faculties exist in some private Universities like the Catholic University of Kabgayi. The Great Lakes Media Centre (GMLC) was launched in Kigali in 2008 to upgrade the professional level of journalists of the sub region. In 2009, a total number of 28 Rwandan journalists graduated from GMLC.

24. Given the Rwandan context, where freedom of expression was previously abused through media outlets culminating into the Genocide, Rwanda guarantees the freedom of expression while safeguarding against its abuse that might easily degenerate into another form of violence. The Media High Council (MHC) was established to promote freedom, responsibility and professionalism of the media. It is composed of two representatives of the private media, one representative of the public media, one representative of the civil society, one representative of the private sector and two representatives of the Central Government. The MHC has the capacity to take any disciplinary measures against journalists or media institutions that violate established laws. It is in that regard that two independent Newspapers (Umuseso and Umuvugizi) were suspended for six months by the Media High Council.

25. A draft bill on access to information, which obliges all public institutions to provide to the media all needed information, is currently before the Ministry of Information. A Media Policy (2004) which provides guidance on media professionalism and development

in the country is also in place to compliment laws and processes that grant the right of access to information. The President of the Republic holds a monthly conference with the media in which local and international journalists have the opportunity to ask questions to public officials. This conference is held live on national radio and television. A Public open day is organised quarterly by the Ministry of Local Government, provinces, districts and sectors to provide information on service delivery to the public. Similarly, public accountability days, organised in the Parliament on quarterly basis to review the progress of districts in the implementation of the performance contracts (Imihigo), offers a good opportunity of access to information. The electronic media are available and the public is encouraged to use ICT as a modern technique to exercise their right of access to information. Cyber cafés and Tele-centres are also available in different districts of the country, while an ICT bus travels to some remote rural areas, which are not yet connected to internet, to allow them to have access to modern tools of information and communication. Several TV Companies operate in Rwanda (Star Africa Media, DSTV, etc.) to provide a variety of choices on access to information.

E. Freedom of association and freedom of religion

26. The freedom of association is a right of every Rwandan. This is in fulfilment of the obligations contained in the Rwandan constitution but also in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Rwanda is party. With due respect to the law and other administrative requirements, Rwandans have the right to freely form political parties and various other types of associations. Currently there are 10 Political Organisations officially recognized in Rwanda. According to the law, political organizations officially recognized are permitted to organize themselves in a consultative forum. To promote and protect the right to associate, legislative measures were adopted. These include among others the Organic Law governing Non Governmental Organisations, the Organic Law governing political organizations and political ethics, the Law governing cooperatives, etc. These laws contain preventive measures against divisionism and sectarianism. Nevertheless, the number of political parties, associations and cooperatives continue to grow. From 2003, three new political parties were authorized: *Parti pour le Progrès et la Concorde – PPC-* (2003); *Parti pour la Solidarité et le Progrès –PSP-* (2003) and *Parti Social Imberakuri*, while the number of cooperatives tremendously increased from 100 in 2005 to 3000 cooperatives in 2009 in the craft sector alone. Some would be political parties were not registered due to shortfalls in meeting the legal requirements.

27. The freedom of worship is a right of every Rwandan. It is provided for by the Constitution and the practice thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with conditions defined by the law. Every citizen has the discretion to practise his/her faith, without any distinction or discrimination. The majority of Rwandans belong to various religious groups and associations. Currently, there are 312 registered churches in Rwanda. Freedom of religion and worship is exercised without let or hindrance as long as it does not interfere with public order. Currently, there are six faith-based radio stations in the country.

F. Right to education

28. Achievements registered in the area of the promotion and protection of the right to education includes the introduction of universal primary education. Rwanda is gradually breaking barriers that usually prevent children from attending primary education by the abolition of school fees and by constructing more classrooms at the Administrative Sector level where children can easily walk home. This programme has been adopted to enable the country to achieve the goal of Education for All (Universal Primary Education and

Universal Secondary Education) by 2015. The education system increased the number of child enrolment in schools from 1,636,563 in 2003 to 2,264,672 in 2009. The rate of pupils joining the secondary schools increased from 45 per cent in 2003 to 88 per cent in 2009. In 2009, the Government, in collaboration with local communities, constructed 3072 more classrooms.

29. The Government has embarked on the promotion of the Nine years Basic Education for children. Key national policies guiding education include the girl's education policy to ensure that the girl child has equal access to universal education as the boy child, the Special Needs Education Policy for certain categories of Rwandans requiring special attention, as well as the Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation. The One Laptop per child program was put in place with the mission to distribute laptops to primary schools all over the country. The education for children with physical or mental disabilities was introduced and 386 teachers were trained in the methodology for such classes. As a result, 3,333 children with disabilities were integrated in disabled friendly schools. 80 catch-up centres were introduced and currently accommodate 14,900 pupils. 680 teachers are trained to deliver practical lessons to these learners.

30. Early childhood education, which was almost inexistent in Rwanda 15 years ago, is more and more promoted. As of today, 2,330 pre schools have been constructed, in which more than 150,000 children were enrolled. As for the university education, from one university that existed in 1994, the National University of Rwanda, Rwanda has now 27 High Learning Institutions in different provinces of the country. The number of University students rose from 5,751 (4,258 boys and 1,493 female) in 1997 to 63,562 in 2010. Majority of these Universities introduced evening programs, which help different workers to pursue their studies. The adult education was not forgotten: in 2005, there was in Rwanda 6500 literacy centres with approximately 300,000 young and adult learners.

G. Right to work

31. Rwanda ratified a number of ILO Conventions, while others are in the process of ratification. Rwanda ratified also the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The new Labour Law provides for basic labour rights, including the prohibition of child labour, the prohibition of forced labour, the protection of workers against violence or harassment, the prohibition of discriminatory employment and the freedom of opinion. The law also guarantees the freedom of association of workers, trade unions and the right to strike.

32. The Public Service Commission oversees the recruitment and placement of staff in all public institutions. It also arbitrates employment related complaints from individual workers. The National Labour Council was created in 2006 to advise the Government on the problems related to labour, employment, vocational training, social security, occupational health and safety as well as the working and living condition of workers. The Workforce Development Agency (WDA) was established to build technical skills of employees. One of its pillars is the implementation of the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) in order to connect employers and job seekers. In 2008, labour and entrepreneurship development has been promoted through the creation of cooperatives.

33. Another institution in charge of capacity building is RIAM (Rwanda Institute of Administration and Management) which trained a total of 2,907 individuals from public, private and NGOs since 2006 to 2008. In 2009, a careers advisory department was created within RDB (Rwanda Development Board). Careers advisory centers have been set up also in 16 Universities around the country.

34. To build the capacity of young graduates in search for jobs, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Youth, in partnership with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), introduced in 2009 the Rwanda Youth Internship Programme (RYIP) in public and private institutions. By the end of 2010, the total number of 600 young graduates will have completed the programme, and it will continue to run annually. Trainings are also organized for retrenched civil servants: 158 retrenched civil servants received training in entrepreneurship and another 178 were accepted in different higher learning institutions through the Student Financing Agency (SFAR) funds in 2008.

35. Rwanda has removed work permits fees for all workers from the East African Community to attract skilled labor and conditions to obtain work permits were eased for other foreigners, while the Rwandan youth is encouraged to undertake technical trainings. Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centre was set up early 2010 to offer vocational and technical training for the young people who were living miserably on the streets. A total number of 1100 young men, aged between 18 and 35, are trained by the Centre on agriculture and food processing; clean and sustainable energy; building skills; technical skills; beauty and aesthetics. Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres are being created throughout the country. So far, two centres have been opened out of the total six (6) expected, one in each province and Kigali city. At the village level, strategies to improve work are promoted by work trainers called “*abakanguriramurimo*”.

H. Right to social protection

36. Social protection in Rwanda is managed and organized according to categories. The Social Security Fund of Rwanda is responsible for pensions and occupational hazards, while the health insurance of public servants is administered by the Rwandan Public Service Medical Insurance (RAMA). There is also a Military Medical Insurance scheme (MMI) as well as the community-based health insurance (*Mutuelles de Santé*). The total insurance coverage stood at 92 per cent in the country at the end of 2009, with 86 per cent subscribing to community-based health insurance and 6 per cent to RAMA, MMI and private insurance offered by financial companies like the National Insurance Company (SONARWA), *Societe Rwandaise d'Assurance* (SORAS); *Compagnie Rwandaise d'Assurance et de Reassurance* (CORAR) and international insurance companies like AAR and Phoenix inc. It is worth noting that the annual subscription to *mutuelle de santé* is 1,000 RWF (around 2 USD) per head. Nevertheless, the Government pays for indigent people: in 2008 they were 714,250 beneficiaries of free health cards. Through the implementation of policy on social security, Rwanda intends to take various measures among which the introduction of a universal pension scheme so that all Rwandans over the age of 65 years can receive a pension.

37. One cow per family Program (GIRINKA) is a Government Initiative, which aims at giving a cow to every poor family that has none, in a bid to increase nutrition levels through milk drinking and reduce diseases related to malnutrition, in addition to increasing family income by selling surplus milk. Manure and cow dung will also improve soil fertility, thus increasing food productivity. From 2006 to the end of 2009, the total number of 84,589 families had received cows.

38. Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) is a programme whose objective is to reduce the number of Rwandans living in extreme poverty, through its branch known as social protection programme. VUP has three components, namely direct support to indigent heads of households who are unable to work for a living (by providing them with subsistence allowances and health insurance cover). Another component consists in providing employment opportunities to indigent heads of households who are capable of working on public utilities in the framework of Labour Intensive Programs (29,674 people

found employment through this project in 2008) and the third component is to help communities to earn a living and join savings cooperatives (SACCOs) to begin investment plans. Because of effective government programs to fight poverty, the number of households headed by vulnerable people has reduced from 51 per cent in 2002 to 43 per cent in 2007.

39. The Government Fund for Genocide Survivors (FARG) also contribute in providing assistance to the most needy Genocide survivors by providing food, shelter, medical care and tuition fees for children and teenagers. From 1998 to the end of 2005, around 50 millions USD had been allocated to nearly 250,000 secondary students and ,000 students in higher education in form of school fees and supplies.

40. Concerning the historically marginalized group, decent houses have been constructed to 2,227marginalized families and vulnerable population; a number of children from marginalized and other vulnerable families are currently benefiting from free education for all in primary and secondary schools, with a good number of students from the same background studying in High Learning Institutions with the support of the Ministry of Local Government. In 2008, the Government provided 44,192,040 RWF to different districts for the income generating projects of the marginalized and vulnerable groups especially in agriculture, livestock and modern pottery. The vulnerable groups, like other Rwandan citizens, benefit from different programs to improve the living conditions of the population: 84 per cent of the qualified vulnerable families enjoy free health insurance (*mutuelle de santé*); 22 per cent were given land and received cows in 2010 through “one cow per family program”. The Special Rapporteur on indigenous people in Africa visited Rwanda in 2008 and appreciated the Rwandan Government’s efforts to promote the rights of the marginalized and vulnerable population.

I. Right to family life and to property

41. The State protects the family as the natural foundation of the Rwandan society. The Rwandan legislation stipulates that marriage has to occur by free consent and spouses have the same rights and duties during marriage and divorce. Rwanda has ratified the Convention on the Consent to Marriage, the Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. The institution of marriage in Rwanda is governed by law. The law on Matrimonial Regimes, Succession and Gifts give equal rights to succession to all boys and girls. There is a National Policy on Family Promotion. Couples in common marriages are sensitised and encouraged to enter into a civil marriage, and this plays an important role in protecting the right to succession for mainly women and children.

42. Property rights are governed by several laws including the law governing expropriation for public utility; the Organic law determining the use and management of land in Rwanda; the Law on Intellectual Property, etc. A National Policy on Land as well as a Strategic roadmap for land tenure reform constitutes essential tools on land ownership. A Ministerial Order provides modalities of land sharing. The Instructions of the Prime Minister define implementation of client charter on land administration and land acquisition. A campaign to register property is being carried out by the National Land Centre and this will enable title holders to gain access to credit by mortgaging their land. The campaign started in all Districts and about 700,000 land plots have been registered. Land redistribution was successfully carried out in the Eastern province in order to address past injustices.

J. Right to culture

43. An Institution for the revitalization of the traditional school of culture (Itorero ry'Igihugu), as well as an academy of languages and culture have been established to promote culture and ensure transmission of positive cultural values from generation to generation. Beyond state obligations, the constitution grants citizens the right to promote the Rwandan culture. This is shown by the instauration of several associations including among others the association of old wise men (Inteko izirikana), association of writers, photographers, musicians, craftsmen, editors, association of dancing groups, the Rwanda Cinema Centre, the play production groups, etc. The national cultural troop (Urukerereza) and different private cultural troops like "Inganzo Ngali" participate in different international cultural festivals where they win various medals and prizes. Because of its renowned rich culture of traditional songs and dance, Rwanda was allocated by the African Union the organization of the Pan African Dance Festival (FESPAD) every two years.

44. The State promotes museums countrywide ranging from the national museum in Butare with its specialized branches spread across the country, such as the Natural History Museum at Nyarugenge/Kigali (2006), the Arts Museum at Rwesero (2006), the Museum of Ancient History at Rukali/Nyanza (2008) as well as another branch at the Ex-State House in Kanombe. There is a program to establish a museum in each district of the country. The Rwandan Universities are also involved in the promotion of culture: Departments of Fine Arts were opened at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) and at Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), while the Centre for Arts and Drama in the National University of Rwanda (NUR) will be soon transformed into a Faculty of Fine Arts, Music, Dance and Drama (performing arts).

K. Right to justice

45. As it is provided for in the Constitution, Rwanda commits herself to the Rule of Law and the respect of human rights. This commitment has been translated in the initiation of reforms in the justice sector with the view to improve and ease access to justice. National courts were restructured in such a way that cases which initially ended up in the Supreme Court are now tried by the High Court or Intermediate Courts, depending on their nature and weight. These reforms reduced the case backlog and discouraged endless proceedings. Primary Courts were empowered to handle most of the cases referred to courts by Mediation Committees. Laws have been reviewed to provide for a single judge system at all levels, except for the Supreme Court, in order to reduce delays in legal proceedings. Specialized chambers for minors as well as labour and commercial courts were established.

46. Qualified judges have been recruited: before 2004, out of 702 judicial personnel, only 74 were qualified judges, which correspond to 11 per cent, while at present, all the 281 judges in the judiciary have at least a degree in law. In 1997 the Bar Association had 37 members only, operating in the Capital City, whereas their number has increased to 619 members in 2010, operating in different provinces of the country. The Institute of Legal Practice and Development (ILPD) has been established to provide practical training and tools in legal practice to law graduates prior to effective employment in the profession. The judicial personnel as well as the performance of courts are evaluated on a quarterly basis to ensure accountability and transparency as well as effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. All this impacted on the performance of the judiciary: in 2005, the number of cases judged by the High Court of the Republic and the Intermediate Courts were 1,166 and 6,305 respectively, while in 2008 the judged cases increased to 3,008 for the High Court of the Republic and 10,222 for the Intermediate Courts.

47. The right to defence is guaranteed in all courts. As for criminal cases involving minors, special procedures and legal assistance are particularly availed. The Government has introduced a legal assistance system to ensure access to justice by vulnerable groups. Anyone with a local authority certificate proving that he/she is indigent may access justice before courts without paying court fees. At each Intermediate Court, two lawyers are appointed and paid by the Ministry of Justice to assist minors with case. In all other cases for vulnerable persons, the Bar Association appoints a counsel to assist the needy people. The Ministry of Justice has opened Access to Justice Bureaus (*Maisons d'Access à la Justice*) in all districts. There will soon be established in the said Access to Justice Bureaus specific desks to deal with gender-based violence and children rights. Civil Society Organisations also, with the support of different partners, put in place a Legal aid Forum, with the mission for delivering legal aid to the people.

48. Following the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis, Gacaca courts, a traditional participatory justice, mixed with some techniques of modern justice, were introduced to try Genocide cases that had piled up before courts. From the inception of Gacaca courts in 2002 until October 2008, a total number of 1,127,706 cases were filed before Gacaca courts out of which 1,123,027 were tried and completed. Only 4,679 cases are still pending for trial. Mediation Committees (Abunzi), put in place in every village of the country, have effectively improved expeditious administration of justice by practical involvement of members of the communities in resolving minor disputes. It is worth mentioning that by end of 2009 more than 38,005 disputes had been completely resolved by Mediation committees.

L. Rights of detainees

49. The newly established National Prisons Service is responsible for the promotion and protection of the rights of incarcerated people in accordance with laws; it is also responsible for ensuring the respect of the life, physical and moral integrity and the well-being of detainees. The presidential order governing the construction and the organization of prisons in Rwanda stipulates that each prison facility must have dormitories, suitable toilettes, sports courts, a health center, guest's halls, a kitchen, water and electricity, as well as appropriate air conditioning system for the welfare of detainees and the preservation of safe environment. Each prison in Rwanda has a health facility with medical personnel but, in case of serious illness, prisoners are transferred to the Rwandan main hospitals. Children under the age of three, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers are provided with special treatment such as enhanced diet. Apart from special meals, games and entertainments facilities are provided for the 456 babies living with their imprisoned mothers. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is working on a project to provide early education to children living with their imprisoned mothers. Men and women are incarcerated in separate blocks.

50. In an effort to find a solution to the problem of congestion in prisons, new prisons have been constructed: Mpanga prison (Southern Province), in which are imprisoned criminals from the Special Court of Sierra Leone; the prison of Nyagatare (Eastern Province) for only minors; the prison of Gikombe (Western Province), as well as the prison of Mageragere (Northern Province). Rwanda has also adopted alternative measures to imprisonment including community works (*Travaux d'Intéret Général or TIG*) provided for in the new penal Code. As of September 2010, the total number of 106,918 persons has carried out those community works. Some prisoners are released conditionally before the end of their prison sentences under certain conditions. From 2003 to 2007, the total number of 60,280 prisoners benefited from conditional release, while concerned institutions are examining the release of 2,290 prisoners for the period of 2009–2010. It is also a common practice for Rwandan courts to grant bails as well as deferred sentences (*condamnations*

avec sursis). These measures contributed to the reduction of the occupation rate of the Rwandan prisons, from 193 per cent in 2007 to 143 per cent in 2010.

M. Women rights and children rights

51. Rwanda has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The Constitution establishes various institutions to cater for the promotion and empowerment of women ranging from the Gender Monitoring Observatory (GMO) to the National Council of Women, which is represented in decentralized administration structures. Laws on the protection of women rights or containing provisions protecting women's rights include the law on the prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV); the Law on Matrimonial Regime, Succession and Gifts which allows both male and female children to inherit their parents' properties; the Land Law, which requires that new land titles have to include the names of both husband and wife; etc. Some old gender discriminatory laws were identified and are now under review. Through a partnership with the National Land Centre, GMO is monitoring how the land registration process is addressing gender concerns in all districts. The process has already covered 12 districts where local communities held discussions on land property, inheritance laws, but also on family, on marriage and on GBV. Structures were put in place to fight GBV, from the national level to the village level. As a result, rapes were reduced from 2,999 in 2005 to 383 in 2008.

52. Women are represented in all decision making organs and different other institutions, at least 30 per cent, as prescribed by the Rwandan Constitution. The representation of women is 38 per cent in Government; 50 per cent among Supreme Court judges, while Rwanda has the world record of women representation in Parliament: 56 per cent. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians work hands in hands with the National Women Council and GMO, but also with various women associations. A women guarantee fund was established to facilitate women access to credits. Over 179 projects have been so far financed. 518 women including former street vendors, and former prostitutes, were assisted to form cooperatives based in their home districts. These women have received support amounting to 65 Million RWF.

53. Concerning the child rights, Rwanda ratified almost all international conventions relating to the promotion and protection of child rights including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its additional protocols, the Convention on the protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter country adoption, as well as the African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Rwanda submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Children overdue reports on the implementation of CRC protocols, the report on the implementation of ACRWC was submitted to the concerned Committee of Experts, while the reports on CRC implementation, as well as the reports known as A World fit for the children and Africa fit for the children will be submitted to the concerned institutions in the near future. National laws for the protection of children were adopted, including the law of 2001 on the protection of children rights.

54. Major policies in this area are the National Policy for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children and the National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labour. Among other measures for the promotion of children rights is the establishment, in the National Commission of Human Rights, of the Observatory for the Rights of the Child to ensure the respect of children rights all over the country. The Observatory of the child rights has Committees, in which children are represented, at the national level, at district level and at the sector level. There is also the Forum of children which has children representations up to the village level. Annual Summits for children are organized where representatives of

peers sit to discuss and provide advice and recommendations to the Government on how to exercise their rights. So far, six children summits have been organized from 2004 to 2010. It is also worth pointing out the establishment of a National Commission for Children, whose process is almost at an end, as well as the role played by *Imbuto Foundation* (chaired by the Rwandan First Lady) in the promotion of the young girl education and the child protection.

55. Appropriate facilities are provided to children with disabilities, as well as the basic education for refugee children. Legal assistance is offered to minor children appearing before courts and special rehabilitation centres were created for minors convicted of crimes.

N. Rights of persons with disabilities

56. Rwanda ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol. The law No 01/2007 of 2007 defines modalities for the protection of Persons With Disabilities (PWD's) in general. Ministerial orders have been enacted with the aim to facilitate people with disabilities to have access to education, healthcare, ICT, sports and cultural integration, easy access to different infrastructures including buildings and transport means, etc. Several initiatives have been taken to improve the welfare of PWD's, including their rehabilitation surgery and replacement of impaired body parts. Programs for the persons with blindness have been put in place, including the establishment of eye clinics in several hospitals and provision of mental health services in 44 major hospitals. The national council of persons with disabilities was established to monitor the implementation of different programs for the promotion of the rights of PWDs.

57. The Disability Rehabilitation Centre in Kigali has been giving vital support to 300 PWD's a month since 1997. The Gikondo Centre known as RBC (*Réadaptation à Base Communautaire*), funded mainly by Christian Blind Mission (CBM), offers help and rehabilitation to disabled young people from across East Africa. The Centre specialises in helping people who have lost limbs or broken bones, and those who suffer from conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, epilepsy, Down's syndrome, arthritis, club foot and Blount's disease. Thanks to the cooperation between the Rwandan Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, a total of 1,025 disabled demobilized soldiers have been retrained in practical, vocational skills like plumbing, bricklaying, tiling, tailoring and agriculture. This scheme started in 2005 and will continue running to help the remaining 9,041 disabled former soldiers.

58. The Government of Rwanda helped PWD's to organize themselves in different associations, all under an umbrella association called FENAPH (*Fédération Nationale des Personnes Handicapées*). People with disabilities of Rwanda are represented in all in all levels of administration: the Rwandan Parliament, even the East African Community legislative Assembly (EALA). The representation of PWD's in Rwandan schools is growing, even at University level. In 2003, there were 600 pupils with disabilities in Rwandan primary schools; this number went up to 2,000 in 2008; while around 30 students with disabilities are pursuing their studies in Rwandan High Learning Institutions. In sports, national, regional and international tournaments and competitions are often organized in Rwanda for PWD's.

O. Rights of asylum seekers, refugees and returnees

59. The right to asylum is guaranteed under the Rwandan law. The extradition of foreigners is permitted only if it is in line with domestic law and/or international conventions to which Rwanda is signatory. Rwanda ratified the Convention Relating to the

Status of Refugees, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The African convention on displaced persons has been signed and is in the process of ratification. To complement the above treaties, several legislative measures have been adopted, including the law on refugees as it was amended and completed by the Law of 2006.

60. Thanks to the joint efforts by the Ministry in Charge of Disaster Management and Refugees and the Ministry in charge of social affairs, tripartite meetings with UNHCR and the countries of origin of refugees hosted by Rwanda or with UNHCR and countries hosting Rwandan refugees are held regularly in the search for durable solutions to the problem of refugees. Such countries are mainly Uganda, DRC, Malawi, Zambia, Kenya and Burundi. Rwanda is known for having repatriated and resettled the biggest number, around three millions, of refugees after the 1994 Genocide. Returnees have been resettled, given land by the government, while UNHCR provided them with iron sheets to construct shelter. The Ministry of Health in collaboration with local health centres provided returnees with medical care, including the community health insurance. On the basis of the Ministerial Instruction of 2010, refugees who have spent 15 years acquire identity cards, providing them the right to work and their children become Rwandans.

P. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms and with other partners

61. In collaboration with UN Agencies, Rwanda has established a programme for strengthening good governance and institutional responsiveness at six key institutions dealing with the promotion and protection of human rights, namely the Parliament, the National Women Council, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the Media High Council, the National Commission for Human Rights and the Ombudsman's office. With the same collaboration, a Treaty Body Reporting Unit was established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a legal aid programme was put in place to assist vulnerable citizens before courts and administrative institutions.

62. Rwanda was the first country to subject herself to the evaluation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2005 as it is among the countries that regularly submit periodic reports on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). The Government of Rwanda plays a key role in international conferences for the promotion of human rights all over the world and Rwanda hosted different international forums aimed at the promotion of human rights: conferences on the abolition of death penalty, on the promotion of women rights, on the ratification of key human rights instruments like the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance, on the preservation of environment, on the fight against AIDS, etc.

63. In cooperation with the UN department of peace keeping operations and with the African Union, Rwanda has participated in various peacekeeping missions including in Sudan, Liberia, Ivory Cost, Sierra Leone, Comoro Islands and Haiti. The participation of Rwandans in the leadership of regional human rights institutions, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court of Human Rights, is another sign of Rwanda commitment to the promotion of human rights.

64. The National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) participated as a member of the International Coordinating Committee of Human Rights (ICC) from 2007 to 2009. The NCHR is also a member of the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum as well as the Vice President of the Francophone Human Rights institutions. Regionally the NCHR is a member of the steering committee of the African Human Rights Commissions network and is currently the interim chair of national Human Rights Institutions of the East African Community. The NCHR cooperates with local organizations participating in human rights promotion.

IV. Best practices, challenges and constraints

A. Best practices

65. To deal with human rights related challenges, Rwandan innovations based on culture are of huge assistance:

(a) **Gacaca**, which is a traditional justice system, re-established after the 1994 Genocide to help in dealing with Genocide related matters. Gacaca courts managed to down size the cases backlog throughout the country due to the large size of the population implicated in the Genocide perpetration. Gacaca has also contributed greatly to reconciliation efforts in the country by revealing the true criminals and innocents, establishing the exact figures, names and locations of the victims as well as proving justice through trials and convictions to the culprits.

(b) **Conciliatory Committees (Abunzi)** have been and still are essential in resolving population disputes. In matters pertaining to matrimonial rights and responsibilities, land issues and neighbour disputes, conciliatory committees have tremendously saved people time and money from frequenting courts to petition for such petty issues, yet harmful to good neighbourliness between the people, if they remained unattended to.

(c) **Performance Contracts (Imihigo)** is a national performance evaluation system based on results. Performance is measured on the basis of assigned attributions and achieved results. Mayors sign performance contracts with the President of the Republic while other officials sign performance contracts with their leaders. The performance contracts contribute greatly to the improvement of the wellbeing of the population.

(d) **The National Dialogue Council (Inama y'Igihugu y'Umushyikirano)** is a national forum in which Rwandans of all walks of life participate in annual discussions aimed at evaluating how the country is governed and delivers on various policies and programmes. It allows the citizens to hold leaders accountable for the entrusted offices.

(e) **Girinka programme (one cow per family)** was instituted to uplift the economic and nutritional wellbeing of the poor people through milk consumption and selling.

(f) **Umuganda (Community Works)** which brings village residents together to collectively participate in works of common interests after which they get together to discuss issues pertaining to the general well being of their community.

(g) **Itorero ry'Igihugu (National Civic Education)**, re-introduced to promote cultural positive values and to help communities participate in searching for home grown solutions to emerging challenges.

(h) **The National Programme for economic empowerment of the poor (Ubudehe)**, initiated to uplift the wellbeing of the population through employment on rural infrastructure.

(i) Apart from the best practices based on the Rwandan culture, other best practices include the following: the **Universal Health Insurance (Mutuelle de santé)**, which is a medical care programme instituted to enable the citizens acquire and access medical assistance to overcome the rampant health challenges.

(j) **Access to Justice Bureaus (Maison d'accès à la Justice)** which facilitate vulnerable groups and poor people to have free access to legal representation in all 30 districts of the country.

(k) **The Observatory of the Child Rights:** this unit has become instrumental in promoting and protecting the rights of the child through mass sensitization and establishment of child rights observatory departments at local levels, thereby taking the decision-making powers to the children.

B. Challenges and constraints

66. Despite the national efforts gathered to promote and protect human rights, there still are challenges as highlighted hereunder.

(a) **The population growth** rate of 2.8 is a big challenge. The fertility rate of 6 children per woman is very high in comparison to the population density of 373/km². This challenge contributes to the gravity of land scarcity among the majority of rural citizens who largely contribute to 85 per cent of the agriculture sector employment.

(b) **Limited resources to tackle the problem of extreme poverty:** the population under extreme poverty is 33 per cent while 21.4 per cent are moderate poor households. 54 per cent of the population that is poor implies that it is directly affected by economic inabilities, vulnerable to diseases related to poor living conditions. The Government's commitment to face this challenge is hampered by the problem of limited resources.

(c) **Lack of appropriate mechanisms to protect the rights of the informal sector:** the informal sector remains susceptible to employment challenges and work related problems. The informal sector constitutes 93.8 of the working population: agriculturalists and farmers working on family land (71 per cent), salaried farming workers (6 per cent), domestic workers (15.2 per cent), etc. This category of workers is more and more organized in cooperatives. The labour law protects them in matters related to health and security, but other mechanisms are needed for their protection in terms of pension and social security.

(d) **Unwillingness or lack of commitment** for many States to tackle and bring to justice Genocide fugitives on their soil, encouraging them to continue their malicious campaign against the Rwandan Government's efforts to reconcile and develop the country. Tens of Thousands of *Interahamwe* militias and ex-governmental soldiers, who committed the Tutsi Genocide in 1994, camp near Rwandan borders in neighboring countries and constitute a real threat to peace and security in Rwanda and in the whole region.

V. Key national priorities as identified by stakeholders, initiatives and commitments that the State concerned should undertake

67. Rwanda's priorities in the field of promotion and protection of human rights are mainly the following: the first key priority action for the promotion of human rights in Rwanda is to increase investment in rural areas in order to eradicate extreme poverty and, hence, improve the living conditions of the population. Other priority actions include the promotion of land use management; the control of the population growth through family planning; the adoption of the human rights policy as well as the national action plan for the protection and the promotion of human rights; the sensitization of legal practitioners for more utilization of international human rights instruments; the putting in place of mechanisms for a better protection of the informal sector of workers, including the putting in place of the employment minimum wage; etc.

VI. Expectations in terms of capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by stakeholders

68. Rwanda needs procedural assistance to undertake the above mentioned key national priorities to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights. Rwanda also needs the same assistance in education and in changing the mindsets of the population so that they know their rights; but also in dealing with and bringing to justice the Genocide perpetrators settled and freely moving around in the world, looking for opportunities to undermine Rwanda's achievements in peace, unity and socio-economic development.

VII. Conclusion

69. The Government of Rwanda is committed to the promotion and the protection of human rights as it has been demonstrated throughout this paper. There is no doubt that Rwanda achievements in the field of human rights are significant even more on the ground than this report can possibly elucidate, due to the limitation of page numbers for all data and testimonies to be included but also to the fact that data and statistical collection mechanisms are problematic in some areas of the country. However, the good news is that Rwanda is to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) even before 2015: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowering women and ensuring the environmental sustainability. Besides Rwanda achieving the MDGs ahead of deadline, it has also established various institutions as shown in this paper, to help promote and protect the human rights from every angle of the Rwandan society. The recent ones are the Rwanda Governance Advisory Council and the Task Force on Treaty Reporting. The two institutions, in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics, are currently involved in collecting real statistical data in all areas related to good governance and Human Rights.

70. The preparation of the next reports related to the situation of human rights in Rwanda will be easier and with much more display of statistics. Apart from the Government institutions, the Civil Society Organizations and local NGO's are more and more interested in human rights and treaty reporting. They not only participate in the preparations of government's reports, but also they do prepare and send to concerned treaty bodies their own alternative reports. But in some cases, some NGO's and International organizations exaggerate the existing challenges, in their alternative reports, and that becomes a challenge itself as the media and other organizations with a biased agenda pick on that and distort the image of Rwanda. Sixteen years after the 1994 Tutsi Genocide, a lot has been done in promoting and protecting human rights in Rwanda. However, it is a process and there is a room for improvement. Rwanda welcomes the recommendations from the Human Rights Council and partner States.
