

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY
GENERAL DURING THE SECOND STAKEHOLDERS' RETREAT TO FOLLOW UP ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) RECOMMENDATIONS

EPIC HOTEL, NYAGATARE: 20-21 JUNE 2019

Excellencies Ambassadors;

Resident Coordinator of ONE UN/Rwanda;

Distinguished representatives of UN agencies;

Distinguished representatives of the Diplomatic Community;

Distinguished representatives of Government Institutions;

Members of Civil Society;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning!

Let me first take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for honouring our invitation and joining us in this two-day second stakeholders' retreat away from Kigali.

We are aware of the many responsibilities you have back in your respective institutions and are extremely grateful that you spared us two days out of your schedules to make this retreat a success.

Distinguished participants,

Every time we get the opportunity to meet in this kind of gathering, we brief each other on the journey Rwanda has undertaken in the UPR process. While many faces are familiar, particularly in this process, I am informed that there are a few other colleagues who joined us for the first time. That being the case, you will kindly allow me to spend a moment on Rwanda-UPR journey since the first review.

As a brief background on UPR process in Rwanda, we went through the first cycle of UPR in 2011 and accepted to implement 67 recommendations. In 2015 the second review took place we had performed quite fairly on the implementation of the accepted recommendations. We then gladly undertook to implement 50 new recommendations. Since November 2015, Rwanda is in the third cycle which will end in November 2020.

Remaining on this point allow me clarify one thing—the recommendations that Rwanda has been implementing are the result of the second review. I noted earlier that Rwanda accepted 50 recommendations. These were picked from a list of more than 230 recommendations. The remaining recommendations were noted. This means that, they can be implemented, and we aim to do that, but they do not form part of the commitments we undertook.

I want to believe that, those who have been with us in this process from the beginning, particularly the ones who are directly involved in the implementation,

know the fifty recommendations and cannot confuse them with the noted ones. In this regard, while we welcome the views from anybody who is interested in the process and for that matter wishing to hold us to account on what we are doing, I wish to invite them to do so on recommendations we committed to implement.

Distinguished participants

Friends,

Since our last retreat held in Rubavu from 27th to 28th September 2018, some positive developments were registered based on what we had agreed:

- With a view to maintaining this process open, the Ministry created a group email which serves to ease communication between Members of the Treaty Body Reporting Task Force. Currently, the group has more than 60 contacts from both Government's Institutions and Civil Society. I hope it has been an important tool for communication. The group will continue to be updated and any person interested in the reporting process can be added.
- In addition, the Ministry continued to update the first draft report. Work will continue until end of January next year. We will have the draft report online before the end of the first quarter of the year 2019/2020 (July-September 2019) to permit your easy access and input.
- On 21 May 2019, we organized a breakfast meeting with Development Partners access progress. This was in line with our commitment to continue to have an inclusive process. This retreat is part of that process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Development Partner's meeting, I just alluded to, we hinted at our plan of making this retreat a great one both content and form. We will try to keep our promise, and I call upon each of us to be part of the process not merely an invited guest.

The next two days are going to be less formal and engaging. As you might have noted on your program, we have adopted a bit of a different style from the usual retreats. Besides a brief presentation on the updated status of implementation, a big portion of our time is going to be dedicated on a simulation exercise.

In the exercise, we will simulate the human rights council review. Some of us will be Troika members; some, members of the delegation from the state under review and others, the General Assembly.

This exercise is not an attempt to prepare for a case in Geneva. We do not have a case to respond to in Geneva or elsewhere. We are talking about Rwandans' human rights. The main objectives of the exercise are to enable us clearly understand what we have so far as information on the implementation; how this information could be well presented in the report; the gaps and how together we can move forward in the remaining few months. That said, permit me to invite all of us, to take seriously this exercise and at the same time enjoy and have fun from it.

Importantly, I want to call upon and encourage everybody, particularly the representatives from the institutions that are directly involved in the implementation to make efforts to furnish our International Justice Department with current data and information concerning recommendations relevant to your institutions.

Distinguished participants;

Colleagues and Friends;

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the Government of Rwanda's commitment in protecting and advancing human rights. We assure you that following up on the implementation of the recommendations remains a priority at the Ministry and we will continue to keep this process open and inclusive.

Needless to add, it has been a great learning time and on behalf of my Government, I am grateful to all, collective or individual, who engage with us, whenever opportunity or cause arises, on human rights issues. I am sure we always come out of the engagement better informed on what to work on or what to understand better.

Once again, thank you all, so much, for having positively responded to our invitation. Our sincere appreciations to the UNDP for your continued support both human and material.

Thank you!