

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

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

GORILLA HOTEL, RUBAVU – 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2018

Distinguished representatives of Government Institutions;

Distinguished representatives of UN agencies;

Distinguished representatives of the Diplomatic Community;

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 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,

As you all know, Rwanda appeared before the Human Rights Council UPR Working Group almost 3 years ago, for its second cycle review. During its review, Rwanda accepted to implement 50 recommendations before the next cycle scheduled in November 2020.

This process has been a learning tool for us as Rwandans, provided an opportunity for self-reflection and afforded the Government a platform for continuous dialogue on Human Rights issues.

The universality of the UPR process makes it unique as it ensures that each and every Member State of the United Nations is reviewed equally and uniformly. It is therefore crucial to take this process seriously and put the requisite effort in the implementation of the recommendations to ensure that they are as fully implemented as can possibly be before the next reporting period.

As you recall we decided together that this process will be Government led and be inclusive of Civil Society, Private sector, Development Partners and other interested stakeholders so that at the reporting time our report will include the views of all stakeholders. We intend to keep it that inclusive until we have our country report.

We are therefore very happy to see a diverse audience here. The follow-up and preparation phase of our report requires the voluntary collaboration of all of

us. Each participant here, individual or organisation was invited because of their crucial role in UPR process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We agreed during our mid-term review back in February, that the Ministry of Justice would organise quarterly meetings to ensure regular sharing of information on the implementation process of the recommendations. It is in this spirit that a workshop was organised in June.

I am pleased to inform you that our team prepared a zero draft to present to us at this retreat . The draft is basically a collection of the work so far done by the various thematic groups. You remember our recommendations were thematically arranged and volunteer individuals and organisations were assigned to work on them.

We are now only 2 years away from Rwanda's third review. This retreat is therefore to assess and evaluate the progress made and agree on the next step. Let us use these two days to provide the necessary inputs. This process also benefits the Ministry of Justice, particularly the International Justice & Judicial Cooperation Department, in overseeing the compilation of the necessary information for the report.

We will try to keep the format of the retreat simple. A presentation on the draft UPR progress report will follow shortly before we go into working groups to think some more and provide more input.

The presentation is of a draft zero, lets feel free to discuss it so the drafting team continues to improve on it with time. I call upon all institutions involved in

the implementation of the recommendations to continue providing data updates where applicable.

Distinguished participants,

I take the opportunity of this retreat to reaffirm the Government of Rwanda's commitment in protecting human rights. As we have stated before, the Geneva UPR cycle is not the beneficiary of this process. The beneficiaries are the Rwandan people. Therefore, success in protecting, preserving and promoting human rights is here, at home, before it is reported.

Following up on the implementation of the recommendations has been a priority at the Ministry and we will continue to be proactive as the lead institution. 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.

With these few remarks, let me conclude by expressing once again our appreciation to all of you for demonstrating commitment throughout this process.

Once again, thank you for being here!