# **REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**CONSIDERATION OF RWANDA’S COMBINED FIFTH AND SIXTH PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**27 to 28 January 2020**

**Geneva-Switzerland**

**Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child,**

**Members of the Committee,**

**Representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs),**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, it is a pleasure to join you at this occasion of the consideration of its combined fifth and sixth periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
2. I would like to **thank you** for this opportunity to deliver this statement to the Committee and have a dialogue on measures taken by the Government of Rwanda to implement its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
3. The **delegation** of the Republic of Rwanda is as follows:
* **Amb. Soline NYIRAHABIMANA**, Minister for Gender and Family Promotion;
* **H.E. Marie Chantal Rwakazina-** Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations Office at Geneva.
* **Dr. UWERA KANYAMANZA Claudine**, the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Children (NCC);
* **Mrs. UMURUNGI Providence**, the Head of International Justice and Judicial Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST).
* **Mr. Moses Rugema-** First Counsellor,Permanent Mission of Rwanda UNOG

**Chairperson of the Committee,**

**Members of the Committee,**

1. We have just celebrated 30 years of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. This important anniversary coincided with the 25th Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda which not only destroyed the social fabric of our nation but had a disproportionate impact on the rights of children. Rwanda continues to address the legacy of the Genocide against the Tutsi. As we continue on the path towards our vision of national development, this legacy continues to inform the laws, policies and programmes to improve and ensure the full realisation of the rights of children in Rwanda.
2. The Government of Rwanda recognizes that **children have an important role to play in the life of the country** and has fully endorsed the fundamental rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and its Optional Protocols. Particularly, the **protection of the child by his/her family, society and State is enshrined in Article 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda** of 2003 revised in 2015. This reflects the **high-level political will** by which the Government of Rwanda upholds the rights of children.
3. The Government also ensures the **progressive realization of children’s economic, social and cultural rights** under the Convention and resources are invested in its implementation. **Targets and benchmarks** on child rights are mainstreamed in **national strategic frameworks such as the National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1)** and **Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs)** in order to measure the progressive achievement of these rights.

**Chairperson of the Committee,**

**Members of the Committee,**

1. Allow me to highlight some **recent developments** realized by Rwanda in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols:
2. **IDENTITY AND NATIONALITY**
3. The Government of Rwanda has taken **measures to ensure free and immediate birth registration**. In this regard, legal reforms, strategies and countrywide campaigns have been taking place to raise awareness of citizens on the importance of birth registration.
4. The law governing persons and family as amended on 30/12/2019, provides for **e-birth registration** in all health facilities was adopted by Parliament and is at the stage of promulgation. This law will ensure early electronic birth registration at all levels and enable data collection and production of vital statistics through a web-based system (the **Civil Registration and Vital Statistics CRVS)**.
5. **FAMILY AND ALTERNATIVE CARE**
6. **All 3,323** children who lived in orphanages in 2012 have been **placed in families,** through the *Tubarere Mu Muryango* program (let’s raise children in families). **Professional social workers and psychologists** lead the process of placing children in loving and protective environment and **monitor** children’s integration into their new homes.
7. A system of volunteers known as **“Inshuti z’Umuryango”** **(Friends of the Family) at the lowest level of administration** has been established. They are responsible for monitoring child protection issues and reporting them to the relevant authorities. They also **sensitize their peers** on positive parenting and child-friendly practices at community level.
8. **SURVIVAL, HEALTH AND STANDARDS OF LIVING**
9. Significant progress has been achieved in the health sector. Currently, **79% of households** in Rwanda are enrolled in **community-based health insurance scheme known as Mutuelle de Sante,** which provides them access to affordable and quality health services. **93%** of children under five in Rwanda are **immunised** according to the Demographic Health Survey 2015.
10. The proportion of **births attended in Health Facilities** and assisted by a skilled staff increased from **69%** in 2010 to **91%** in **2015 (DHS).**
11. **Community Health Workers (CHWs)** have increased in number (59,348) and are deployed in the community across the country and are playing an important role, **leading our primary health care by handling more than 50% of health conditions**.
12. The National Early Childhood Development Program (**NECDP) was created in 2017** to coordinate all interventions aimed at reducing malnutrition and stunting of children. **Efforts** have been invested to address this issue from the conception of the child; including the distribution of **Fortified blended food (FBF)** to **children under 2 and pregnant and lactating women** from poor families to fight malnutrition and stunting. 92% of pregnant women receive Iron and Folic Acid while 95% of children aged 6 to 59 months receive vitamin A.
13. In addition, children from 2 to 6 years are progressively being channelled through home and community based Early Childhood Development **(ECD) facilities** which provide **holistic services** including child protection, overall child development, positive parenting among others.

**EDUCATION**

1. The Government provides free and compulsory primary and secondary education. In primary schools, the **net enrolment** rate is at **97.3 %** for boys and **98%** for girls.
2. Challenges remain in improving the quality of education and the government remains committed to addressing this issue including through competency-based curriculum.
3. The **school feeding program** through which students are provided a nutritive diet at school is yielding tangible results by reducing the drop-out rates and repetitions.
4. **PROTECTION**
5. The Government of Rwanda has put in place laws **policies and programs for the protection of children against violence, abuse and exploitation**. These include the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 that provides for protection of the child, the Law No. 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child which confers specific rights to children and the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) of 2011.
6. **All forms of child labour are prohibited**. Necessary legal instruments helping to investigate and prosecute those who employ children below the age of 16 are in place. Inspections are conducted regularly by labour inspectors.
7. The Government of Rwanda has put in place a number of measures to respond to the multifaceted challenges faced by street children who are in vulnerable situations and at high risk of being abused or other deviant practices.
8. Our National Rehabilitation Service institution has continued to build infrastructural and management capacity, to attract local and international partnership and has continued to reform, rehabilitate and skill our young people from broken or no families, whose lives were otherwise vulnerable, to drugs, prostitution and crime.
9. The process for offering protection to these children is as follows: When they arrive at the transit centre, there is an ad hoc committee which meets every morning to assess case by case the new arrivals, this is followed by screening and either placement in a family or transfer to a rehabilitation centre. That screening and placement is done within 72 hours. Since 2018, 5065 children have been rehabilitated and reunified with their families.
10. **JUSTICE**
11. Rwanda has put in place **specialized chambers** that try cases involving juveniles. Cases involving children are tried **in camera** to preserve their privacy and **protect them against the stigma** that may result from public hearings.
12. Juvenile offenders are detained in **child-friendly facilities** and are allowed to **pursue their education** and **sit for national exams** just like their fellows in the community. Those who demonstrate high discipline and passed well national exams benefit from Presidential pardon (34 in 2018).
13. **CHILD PARTICIPATION**
14. The Government of Rwanda put in place children’s **forum committees** from the grassroots to National level which meet annually at the **National Children’s Summit which takes place at Parliament. The National Children’s Summit** is a strategic platform for children to express their views regarding their rights, their duties and their expectations.
15. **At family level,** **sensitization campaigns** promoting **positive parenting** with an emphasis on child/parent dialogue are regularly conducted by Government institutions and civil society organizations.
16. **Optional Protocols**
17. The government of Rwanda continues to adhere to its obligations under the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In that regard, Rwanda adopted in June 2019 the Rwanda Child Online Protection Policy, which is designed to mitigate against the risks online, and to deliver a framework that meets children’s needs and fulfils their rights, while enabling them to safely and confidently navigate the digital environment.
18. Rwanda has also adopted a stand-alone law on human trafficking which places particular emphasis on protecting children from trafficking and significantly increases the penalties for child trafficking.
19. With regard to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Rwandan law explicitly prohibits the recruitment and use of children in all security organs.

**Chairperson of the Committee,**

**Members of the Committee;**

1. We acknowledge that we continue to face challenges on disaggregated data, and integrated data management to better inform child policies. We continue to address this issue through collaboration with various partners.
2. Let me conclude by reiterating Rwanda’s commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular upholding the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I thank you once again and am looking forward to a positive and open dialogue with the Committee.