

Canners International Permanent Committee

UPR of Rwanda

Rwanda has maintained political stability since 1994. The last parliamentary elections held in September 2013 saw 64% of the seats taken by female candidates, and the Rwandan Patriotic Front maintain absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. President Paul Kagame is serving his second and last term, and presidential elections are due in 2017. However, in July 2015, Rwandan parliamentarians voted to support a change in the constitution that would allow the president to run for a third term.

Rwanda is considered a model of post-conflict reconstruction. To address these challenges, Rwanda developed the Rwanda Vision 2020 document that identifies key national objectives. The Vision 2020 aims to transform Rwanda from a low income (US\$ 220 in 2000) to a middle income (US\$ 900 by 2020) country (Republic of Rwanda, 2000). Vision 2020 provides the general development objectives and policy goals with the strategic ambition of moving Rwanda towards agricultural development and industrialization. The main objectives are; in the short term, the promotion of macroeconomic stability and wealth creation to reduce aid dependency; in the medium term, the transformation from an agrarian to a knowledge-based economy; and in the long term, the creation of a productive middle class fostering entrepreneurship. To realize the Vision 2020 goals, the Government has adopted a series of medium-term strategic plans, most recently the Second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS2). The focus of EDPRS2 is to bring appropriate solutions to the differential needs of different parts of the country through Sector Strategic Plans and District Development Plans.

Rwanda is on track to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the end of 2015. Strong economic growth was accompanied by substantial

improvements in living standards, evidenced by a two-thirds drop in child mortality and the attainment of near-universal primary school enrolment. A strong focus on home-grown policies and initiatives contributed to a significant improvement in access to services and in human development indicators. The poverty rate dropped from 59% in 2001 to 45% in 2011 while inequality measured by the Gini coefficient reduced from 0.52 in 2006 to 0.49 in 2011

Rwanda has a well- developed social security system. Rwanda has a compulsory public pension scheme called “Caisse Sociale du Rwanda” (CSR) or the NSSF which is administered by a public agency. It is obligatory for all employers and workers within the public and private sectors to join the NSSF. It is currently a fully funded defined benefit (DB) plan and the government assumes the investment risk.

In the social sector, a major improvement has come in the leadership of Rwandan women, who have made history with their newly vital role in politics and civil society. Women currently fill 10 of the 26 Senate seats and 51 of the 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Legislation has strengthened women’s rights to inherit land. No longer confined to positions of influence in the home, they have become a force from the smallest village council to the highest echelons of national government. Understanding how and why such a transformation occurred offers not just an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments. It also provides lessons for other countries struggling to overcome histories of patriarchy and oppression.