

Chapter 2

Principle 2: Clarification
of Objectives and
Administrative Structures

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2.1 Effective policy design and implementation in Rwanda: From vision to action and impact

by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, Rwanda

Overview

Rwanda's governance model, which is based on the challenges occasioned by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi,¹ has proved successful in restoring political and economic stability, and has led to socioeconomic gains that have transformed the lives of millions of Rwandans. Political will from the top to the lowest level of governance, a clear and feasible policy framework and appropriate institutional arrangements are among the key drivers of effective policy implementation in Rwanda.

Furthermore, Rwanda's successful implementation is attributed to 'good fit' approaches built on traditional values. The governance model has been instrumental in supporting home-grown solutions based on traditional values that promote public participation and ownership of the development agenda. Effective policy implementation is sustained by joint and collaborative mechanisms at both national and decentralised levels. This has improved coordination and transparency, which has encouraged development partners to supplement government efforts and resources in support of socioeconomic development in the country.

The overall objective of this case study is to share the Rwandan experience on how policies and development strategies have been effectively translated into actions that have moved the country from a failed state to the verge of becoming a middle-income country.

2.1.1 Introduction

In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda embarked on nation-rebuilding, laying the foundations for a process of poverty reduction and economic growth. The country introduced a number of policies and programmes aimed at addressing the immediate challenges inherited from the past and at moving the long-term orientation towards poverty reduction and improving people's livelihoods. Important changes have been observed in all sectors — economic, social, governance and justice. Each generation of intervention has addressed the prevailing development

challenges, and has in turn informed new development dynamics for further intervention.

Rwanda's development pathway can be traced back through two major phases: the period from the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi up to 2000 and the period from 2000 onwards. The first period saw innovative and uninterrupted crafting of the country's policies and development strategies focusing on the nation rebuilding after its total destruction. During this period, the country was deeply troubled and unstable, with an economy at its knees, engulfed in an unprecedented negative gross domestic product (GDP) trend of -11.4 per cent, coupled with public debt of over US\$1.5 billion, of which 75 per cent was owed to the World Bank and other multilateral lenders. The country thus had no means of recovering at a time when there was a desperate need to restore peace and security and to recreate the overall socioeconomic and political apparatus. It was thus paradoxically imperative to accommodate the pressing needs of the people, to establish functioning government structures and institutions and to set the stage for development — with no resources. The country also needed to allow humanity and patriotism to prevail over grief and loss, through making fundamental choices to stay together as a nation, be accountable and think big in terms of national development goals to guide Rwanda, as highlighted by HE President Paul Kagame at the 20th commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi².

From 2000, Rwanda embarked on a new era of developmental shift from emergency to mid- and long-term development. A set of policies and strategies were endorsed with the aim of transforming the country from a subsistence-led to a more knowledge-based economy. This long-term development path for Rwanda resulted from consultative processes initiated by the Office of the President during 1998–99, which had led to the Vision 2020 development framework for Rwanda outlining what seemed to be very ambitious goals to be achieved by 2020. However, evidence shows how this vision was translated into effective policies, concrete actions and positive impact in all sectors of the economy, guiding the course of action for the government, development partners, the private sector and civil society.

Some of the overarching goals under Vision 2020 are to transform Rwanda into a middle-income country, with an initial per capita GDP target of US\$900, later shifted to US\$1,240 as a result of the rapid pace of growth, to uplift people's livelihoods and to reduce the proportion of those under the poverty line to 20 per cent.

This case study presents a snapshot of the national development policy framework, key development trends and current macroeconomic achievements, as well as corresponding major driving factors of effective

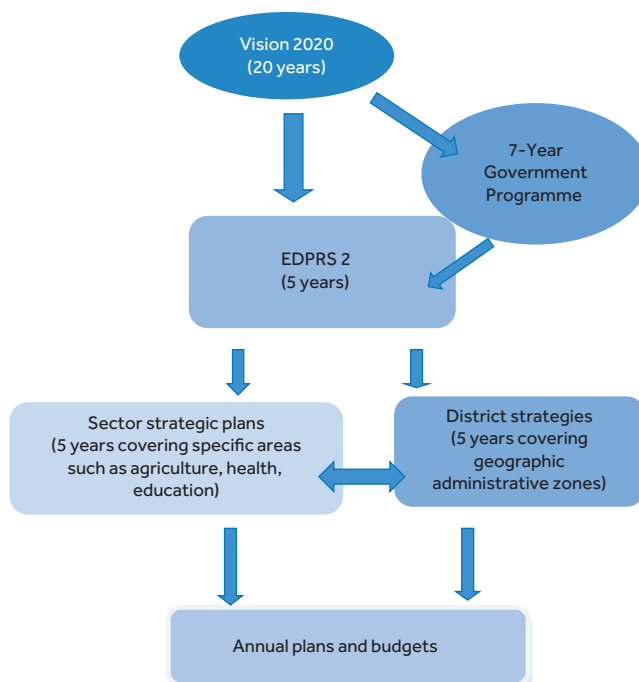
policy implementation in Rwanda. Its aim is to share Rwandan experience on how policies and development strategies have translated into actions that have brought the country from failed state status towards middle-income country status, highlighting major lessons that are informing the country's further development efforts and sustaining the achievements already observed.

2.1.2 The national development policy framework

Vision 2020 has been cascaded into mid-term implementation strategies — the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP) and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 1 and 2) — that serve as a basis for programme planning and implementation in all sectors. The EDPRS sets targets for each sector on which specific sector interventions and resource allocation are based. The EDPRS is, in turn, translated into five-year mid-term goals through sector and institutional strategic plans at central government level. Similar timeframe goals are reflected through district development plans (DDPs) at local government level (see Figure 2.1).

The sector, institutional, and district strategic plans are formulated based on a number of thematic areas that reflect emerging development priorities that must be addressed to attain national economic growth and poverty

Figure 2.1 National development and implementation framework



reduction targets as set in Vision 2020. For instance, the EDPRS 2 thematic areas include Economic Transformation, Rural Development Productivity and Youth Employment, Accountable Governance and Foundational and Crossing-Cutting Issues, which include macroeconomic stability, regional integration, gender, disability and social inclusion, disaster management, environment and climate change, HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases and capacity-building.

The above policies are the result of a deliberate and systematic planning process that has proved pivotal in easing their implementation. At the national level, the first steps are multidimensional consultations geared towards agreement on national development priorities as expressed in the EDPRS. These consultations identify targets to be achieved during the fiscal year by budget agencies. Experience over the years indicates that this process gives other parties, such as Parliament, time to debate plans and corresponding costs in terms of budgets before implementation by responsible government agencies and local governments. At district level, plans and budgets are approved and monitored by district councils to ensure a good match with local needs and priorities. With regard to grants from central government, for both national and local level the approval of plans by Parliament is subject to the previous fiscal year's performance, which sets a strong ground for implementation.

2.1.3 Key sector policies and major achievements

Rwanda has been widely acknowledged for the social and economic progress it has made in the past 15 years, as evidenced by the significant socioeconomic transformation the country has achieved throughout the implementation of the PRSP and the EDPRS 1 and 2 in its efforts to reach the goals laid out in Vision 2020. Rwanda owes this progress to effective implementation of key sector policies put in place, including on governance, health and education; to a clear vision and policy for growth through private investment; and to public sector reforms to uphold and sustain a sense of purpose and commitment by the country's leadership to attain development aspirations that will transform communities and uplift their lives.

Policies related to governance include the National Decentralisation Policy, which defines the roles of the different levels of government to ensure a delivery focus and, importantly, the empowerment of local communities through citizen participation. Another important policy worth mentioning is the National Gender Policy, which has contributed to significant achievements in relation to gender equity and women's empowerment. In the social sector, the government's policy on community-based health services and the Education Sector Strategic Plan, respectively, have guided

the implementation of community-based health insurance (CBHI) and nine- and later twelve-year basic education. Against this backdrop, Rwanda has recorded major achievements across sectors as a result of the generation of relevant policies and their effective implementation.

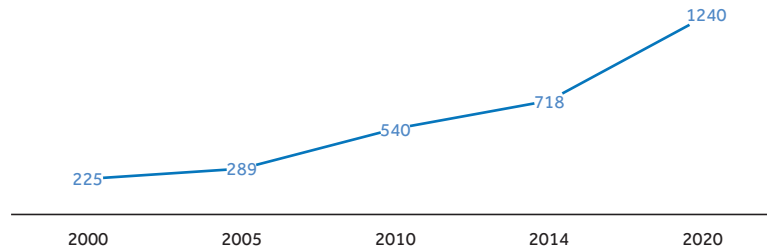
After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the country opted to make the country's security and stability a priority, as a strong basis for sustainable development. Reflecting the significant impact of the country's choice, the Gallup Global Law and Order Report 2015 ranked Rwanda the safest place to walk at night in Africa and the fifth-safest country in the world. This has a considerable bearing on the tourism sector and notable positive externalities for the country's economic growth and development in general.

In the area of gender equity and women's empowerment, enormous strides have been made, in terms of policies and legal reforms to promote gender equality, abolition of laws discriminating against women and the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). For example, Isange One Stop Centre has been established to provide a comprehensive response and care and support services to victims of GBV and child abuse.

The government initiated a nationwide programme to mainstream gender in all national development programmes and activities immediately after the emergency period that followed the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda's aspirations of promoting and empowering women first manifested in the new Constitution (2003), which stipulated that women should take up 30 per cent of all leadership positions in the country. Currently, Rwanda's Parliament is 64 per cent women, making it the first country in the world to have such a large proportion of women sitting in Parliament. Meanwhile, women's economic empowerment programmes have emerged, such as through the creation of the Business Development Fund, a women's entrepreneurship programme with the aim of unleashing the economic potential of Rwandan women and promoting their contribution to the country's economy.

The country's leadership's focus on sustaining the above achievements and making further strides in the area has led to the creation of institutional mechanisms that enhance gender accountability, including a gender machinery. In this respect, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office and the National Women Council have been set up. The 2015–16 Global Competitiveness Report ranked Rwanda the best place in Africa to be a woman and sixth globally.

Improvements in governance are increasingly reflected in citizens' satisfaction with service delivery, which is currently estimated at 71 per cent, against 80 per cent anticipated in 2020.

Figure 2.2 Rwanda GDP per capita, 2000–20 (US\$)

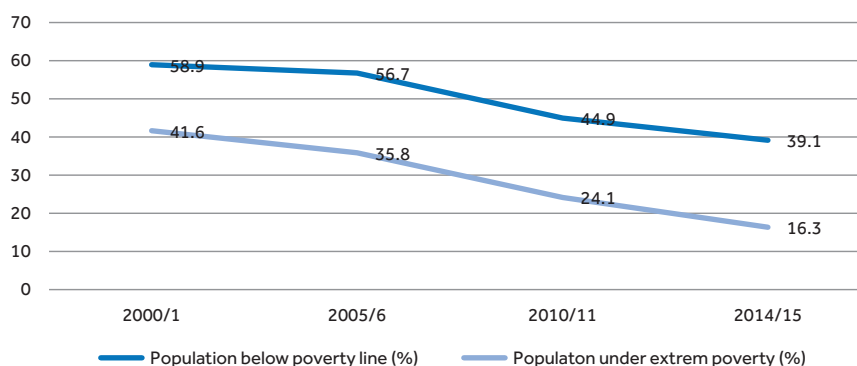
Source: National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR) 2000/01, 2005/06, 2010/11, 2014/15.

Rwanda has made significant strides in the area of economic growth also, thanks to a clear vision and policy for growth through private investment as illustrated by HE President Kagame who strongly believes that trade and investment are pillars of development in Africa and not external assistance. Putting in place a business-friendly environment and strengthening anti-corruption measures have been at the centre of the Rwanda's doing business reforms since 2007, with the aim of attracting foreign direct investment and enhancing the private sector to become the engine of national economic growth. As a result, over the past 15 years, Rwanda has seen steady economic growth, with a current GDP per capita close to US\$800, from \$190 (1994), and sustained economic growth between 7 and 8 per cent for the past 10 years.

In line with this, the 2015–16 Global Competitiveness Report ranked Rwanda the third most competitive economy in Africa (after Mauritius and South Africa) and the first in East Africa. This was echoed by the World Bank Doing Business Report 2016, which ranked Rwanda the second easiest place to do business in Africa (after Mauritius). Rwanda owes this result to its efforts to build strong institutions and policies aimed at improving the level of productivity of the national economy.

Another notable and positive externality of Rwanda's growing economy relates to poverty reduction: sustained economic growth has had a significant impact in terms of reducing poverty in Rwanda. Data from the four rounds of integrated household living conditions surveys conducted in the past 15 years (2000–14) show that 20 per cent of Rwandans were lifted out of poverty while 30 per cent moved from extreme poverty in the same period.

In the social sectors also, tremendous achievements have been recorded, particularly in health and education, owing to the above-mentioned policies, among others. In the health sector, substantial and innovative initiatives have been put in place: the institutionalisation of CBHI; facilitating access to

Figure 2.3 Poverty trends in Rwanda, 2000–15 (%)

Source: Republic of Rwanda Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Rwanda (EICV - 1, 2, 3)

health services by ordinary citizens; the decentralisation of health services; community health workers volunteering for their communities; and a Community Health Information System to improve reporting, including the RapidSMS mechanism to use in health emergencies. These initiatives and many others have enabled Rwanda, among other benefits, to lower its infant mortality rate up to 32 per 1,000 and its maternal mortality rate to 210 per 100,000, from 107 and 1,071 respectively.

Similarly, education sector reforms have led to enormous transformational achievements. Fee-free education, initially for the first nine years of school, with six of these years being primary schooling years, has been extended to cover twelve years of basic schooling, thereby including the entire secondary school cycle. The net enrolment rate in primary education has gone up to 96.9 per cent, with the country's target for 2017/18 at 100 per cent.

The above socio-economic achievements coupled with improved access to health services, sanitation and nutrition have significantly affected the life expectancy of Rwandans. This has increased from an average of 49 years to 64 years, which means Rwanda has already gone beyond the Vision 2020 target of 55 years. In the same vein, the Human Development Report 2015 recognised Rwanda as the most improved country globally in terms of human development since 1990.

2.1.4 Major drivers of effective policy implementation in Rwanda

Four key drivers stand out in Rwanda's successful implementation of policies: good governance, home-grown initiatives that fit into the local context, institutional development and an effective coordination mechanism.

Good governance

Rwanda's success owes mainly to its visionary leadership and good governance. The country's vision combined with a performance-based system has proven to be a working governance model. Rwanda adopted transformational leadership as a key component to uphold its governance tenets, which were destroyed in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The government's main strategy to achieve good governance and sustainable economic development was to decentralise decision-making to bring the development process closer to the people. The post-genocide Government of National Unity initiated the process of decentralisation, leading to adoption of the National Decentralisation Policy in May 2000 and the first local government elections in 2001.

This policy drew on lessons from before the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, a period of poor governance characterised by highly centralised authority and a lack of citizen participation in leadership and development. One of the decentralisation policy aims was and still is to 'enhance and sustain citizens' participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central government to lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation.'

Decentralisation has contributed in a number of areas towards effective policy implementation and development. The first area is peace and security. Decentralised structures have been effective in mobilising, sensitising and working with citizens (through community policing) to keep their areas peaceful and secure. Currently, as mentioned above, Rwanda is peaceful and secure, and this owes partly to excellent civic-military relations, in which citizens and local authorities partner with security agencies to maintain order and peace in their respective localities. Peace and security, in the context of Rwanda, has been and remains an important building block for lasting development.

Other examples of areas to which decentralisation has contributed are resettlement and the promotion of village settlements; empowering citizens to work together and hence strengthening the essence of society; mobilisation of resources for access to education (through addressing the issue of dropouts) and health services (community health schemes and the promotion of basic health care); and collective action towards soil, forest and water conservation in many areas through community work and other initiatives in decentralised units.

Echoing wider observations on the role of decentralisation and transformative leadership in Rwanda's broader developmental success, several authors note

that strong political leadership, from the president down to village level, has been a critical impetus for service delivery in the post-genocide period (Rodriguez Pose and Samuels, 2011; Mcloughlin and Batley, 2012). The decentralisation process has enabled efficiency and efficacy in service delivery (especially through improved access and reduced transaction costs for citizens on certain public services); promoted self-reliance and productivity through different home-grown initiatives at community level (Ubudehe, Umuganda); and created a supportive political and institutional framework for local economic transformation, as further discussed below. Through decentralisation, the Government of Rwanda reiterates its commitment to ensuring accountability, transparency and efficiency in deploying resources, ensuring equity and quality service provision and delivery.

Transparency and accountability are another aspect of governance to which Rwanda's success can be attributed. Rwanda recognises transparency in governance as a precondition for citizens to hold their leaders accountable and ensure sustainable development with sound economic policies and solid transparent institutions responsive to the needs of the people and the fight against corruption.

Rwanda had put in place mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in public institutions, such as income and asset disclosure, a Public Accounts Committee and an auditor-general. Income and asset disclosure systems require that public officials declare their income, assets and financial interests, so as to prevent and help detect the use of public office for private gain and help build a climate of integrity in public administration.

Similarly, a Parliamentary Accounts Committee has been established to ensure that all public financing is spent on the right cause. Every fiscal year, the government publishes the Citizens' Guide to the National Budget. This is designed to give the public a walking tour of the budget, written in easy and simple language possible for every interested citizen to understand. It improves transparency and accountability in Rwanda's public financial management and makes it easier for members of the public and civil society to understand and participate actively in the budget process. It also promotes citizens' voice in public expenditure management and independent oversight of service delivery.

Data reflected in Rwanda's Governance Scorecard 2014 indicate that control of corruption stands at 78.76 per cent while transparency and accountability are at 82.37 per cent. Clearly, there is a strong relationship between effective policy implementation, control of corruption, transparency and accountability. These important soft institutions have contributed to Rwanda's effectiveness in its policy implementation. Success in this regard has helped eradicate corruption in the public sector, leading to equity in service delivery and adequate allocation of public resources.

Successful implementation of policies has also been made possible by the implementation of pro-poor programmes that are built on traditional values. These programmes are closely linked to good governance and are therefore discussed here. They include the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme, Girinka and Ubudehe.

The Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) is a flagship programme of the EDPRS and is enshrined in Vision 2020 (Ministry of Local Government, 2008a). It aims to reduce poverty among the poorest families across the country through both direct support and a cash transfer programme to accelerate social and economic development. The VUP commenced in 2008 and comprises three components: direct support for people who are unable to participate in any employment; public works, which offers job opportunities; and the delivery of loans through special funding opportunities to unleash start-ups for small businesses with the potential to grow and take the beneficiary out of vulnerability. This initiative goes hand-in-hand with an ongoing sensitisation process by the government to inculcate a saving culture and debt reduction through the creation of savings and credit cooperatives at sector (*umurenge*) level.

Girinka — the One Cow per Poor Family programme — is another innovative initiative by the Government of Rwanda. Girinka is a national programme aimed at providing poor families with cows. This programme was initiated in 2000 by HE President Kagame as way of addressing a number of development challenges, such as the high rate of child malnutrition; of accelerating poverty reduction; of integrating livestock and crop farming to facilitate farmers' access to manure for increased agricultural output; and of increasing people's income through the selling of dairy products. Beneficiary families are identified by the community, to ensure transparency and objectivity. The 'passing on of a cow' principle, or *koroza* in Kinyarwanda language, is used, whereby the recipient gives the first-born calf to the next recipient on the list. This contributes to sustainability and has helped rebuild social relationships destroyed during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, enhancing solidarity and social cohesion.

Ubudehe is another pro-poor programme established by the Government of Rwanda. Traditionally, Ubudehe referred to collective action, at community level, for community development. This tradition was re-established towards the end of 2001 to enhance the planning and implementation of anti-poverty measures. Community work is enforced at village or community level in order to alleviate poverty, and is considered a pillar of the ongoing political and financial decentralisation process.

Ubudehe is also one of the mechanisms put in place to restore and improve trust through participation, accountability and performance in Rwanda. By reintroducing Ubudehe, the initial goal was not limited to 'collective action';

rather, it was 'community work' promoting community participation in addressing poverty, as well as fostering the culture of mutual support. Under the programme, each village through a participatory process at selects the two poorest families; they then develop strategies with the larger community in support of two trained volunteers to help the families out of poverty. The programme also enables communities across the country to undertake priority projects (Niringiye and Ayebale, 2012).

Beside community work to support poor and vulnerable households, Ubudehe was also set up to reunite and reconcile Rwandans after the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The overall purpose was to build trust among Rwandans starting a process of healing and working together, to build greater social capital and inclusion, to reduce citizen apathy towards government and among themselves and to strengthen each person's power to act and therefore become an active Rwandan citizen. Ubudehe also facilitates community assessment of development needs by providing a participatory means of classifying poor village households and the community's needs to ensure the most vulnerable can be identified for assistance.

All this implies that the state has to be responsible not just for regulation and policy but also for managing strategies required for implementing policies to enable all citizens to exercise their individual and collective human and economic rights (Tsinda et al., 2015).

Home-grown initiatives

Home-grown initiatives are drawn from ancient Rwandan tradition and are understood as key ingredients to the promotion of good governance and decentralisation. It is believed that home-grown programmes and practices have made an indispensable contribution to the rebuilding of Rwandan society (Rwanda Governance Board, 2013). Alongside decentralisation and transparent and accountable governance, which have been critical in implementing policies, home-grown solutions that fit into the Rwandan context have been instrumental in Rwanda's achievements. Rwanda has been described as an example of how supervision, inspection, evaluation and feedback mechanisms can be successfully deployed alongside more traditional, culturally embedded means of enforcing contracts (through incentives and sanctions), accountability and obligations (Rodriguez Pose and Samuels, 2011). Home-grown solutions in Rwanda include Imihigo, Umuganda, Gacaca, Abunzi, Urugerero, Umushyikirano and Umwihherero.

Imihigo

On the request of and with guidance from HE President Kagame in 2006, Rwanda looked to its culture and adapted Imihigo, a system that encourages

a competitive spirit among challengers but also ensures monitoring and evaluation of performance (Gonsior et al., 2015). Imihigo is an ancestral approach but its modernisation has led to it coming to represent an invaluable tool in the planning and effective implementation of development policies. Imihigo is used in Rwanda to design performance management contracts signed at the level of all public institutions, including ministries, embassies and districts, with the president of the republic. Public engagement is recorded openly in a written contract that presents a set of development targets backed by specific performance indicators over a period of one year. The commitment is mutual: district mayors engage communities to realise development objectives; the president commits the central government to providing the required support.

At the end of every fiscal year, independent evaluators conduct an evaluation to assess performance against Imihigo targets and to identify gaps to inform potential improvements in the Imihigo planning and implementation process. The overall goal of the Imihigo evaluation is to inform the government and development partners on the extent to which Imihigo targets of the central and local government have been achieved and whether these are producing transformative outcomes and expected impacts, as stated in national development frameworks such as the district development plans, the EDPRS, the Seven-Year Government Programme and Vision 2020. Since the planning and evaluation of Imihigo are carried out on an annual basis, this helps in tracking whether designed policies are effective or are leading to the intended outcomes. All Imihigo targets have been transformative and they have been translated into tangible benefits, services and outputs that have addressed the needs of citizens. Further, the results reflect levels of engagement by the private sector, the civil society and citizens in the implementation of Imihigo.

Umuganda

To alleviate poverty and respond to people's needs as stated in the country's policies, the Government of Rwanda has also used Umuganda ('community work'), although the extent to which Umuganda is used for development purposes goes beyond the traditional idea of 'collectiveness'. Collective actions under Umuganda are well coordinated at community level and help address budget gaps in the financing of certain public investments, such as maintenance of roads within the community and small bridges linking locations. Umuganda also serves the purpose of social cohesion, as it brings together members of the community to hold dialogue over problems of common interest and devises means to solve them. Activities under this framework include building of schools, medical centres and hydroelectric plants, rehabilitating wetlands and creating highly productive agricultural plots. The value of activities under Umuganda in fiscal year 2014/15 was

estimated at US\$17,642,381. Umuganda also serves as an important channel for public information exchange and feedback on public policies, as well as creating awareness on community development activities (Rwanda Governance Board, 2014).

Urugerero

In order to enhance the culture of volunteerism targeting different categories of the population in a structured manner, the Government of Rwanda has established Itorero, to inspire positive values among Rwandans and strengthen volunteerism among youth. Traditionally, Itorero was a cultural school where Rwandans would learn language, patriotism, social relations, sports, dancing, songs and defence. This system was created to help young people grow with an understanding of their culture. Through Itorero and similar initiatives, the government introduced the culture of serving the country at no financial reward, encouraging patriotism, positive values, responsibility and selfless service (Urugerero) — attributes that contribute to accelerating progress and promote social cohesion, peace and reconciliation and democratic governance (Tsinda et al., 2015). The use of youth in national service (Urugerero) has enabled the country to at least partially overcome critical financial and human resource bottlenecks (Chambers, 2012; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2012). Besides nurturing a culture of patriotism and selflessness in youth, the concept enables young volunteers to play a critical role in supplementing the overstretched capacity of local government officials (districts and sectors) in service delivery in many instances.

Gacaca

The Gacaca tribunals had the aim of relieving the pressure on the ordinary courts, which were quickly becoming overloaded with the cases of the genocide suspects who were filling the country's prisons. They also had the advantage of functioning within a framework of participatory justice (Richters et al., 2008). In addition, a new form of justice was needed in the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, one that would allow communities, including those affected by the genocide, to participate actively in justice, within a restorative and preventive framework (Ministry of Local Government, 2004). In the Rwandan context, the problem of justice was not a simple one of texts and courts; it required finding an intermediary way between classical justice, reconstitution of the social fabric and prevention of the rolling on of the tragedy — (Waldorf, 2006).

Reconciliation and restorative justice were enshrined as Gacaca's key objectives (Clark, 2010). As Gacaca Law stated, Gacaca was established 'to achieve justice and reconciliation in Rwanda' and was designed with the aim of not only providing punishment but also rebuilding Rwandan society (ibid.). Rwandans preferred this home-grown system of reconciliatory justice

to Western punitive forms of justice, which were perceived as provoking and perpetuating great hostility (Zorbas, 2004). Rwanda's approach, drawing on home-grown traditions, needed to replace imported, divisive practices.

Abunzi

In 2004, the Government of Rwanda reinstated the traditional process of Abunzi. Literally translated, Abunzi means 'those who reconcile'. It is a word stemming from the Kinyarwanda word *kwunga*, meaning 'to reconcile or to restore'. Abunzi are persons renowned for their unwavering values who are elected at community level to manage minor social conflicts and reconcile people, thereby reducing tensions in the community. Abunzi are local mediators mandated by the state to provide a reconciliatory approach to resolve disputes, ensuring mutually acceptable solutions to a conflict. Therefore, Abunzi are community reconcilers, elected by the population on the basis of their integrity. Abunzi try minor civil and criminal cases, especially property-related cases, with a value not exceeding about US\$5,000.

Abunzi is an excellent foundation for a legal aid system and provides a uniquely Rwandan method of dispute resolution, which both empowers people to resolve their own disputes at community level and is extremely economical to maintain. It is designed to decentralise justice, making it affordable (it is free) and accessible (Burnet, 2008). Resuscitation of the Abunzi is part of the Rwandan government's repertoire of initiatives designed to make justice and governance available to citizens at every level. It is an illustrative example of the synergies between the state and local processes of conflict resolution. Its contribution both to the justice system and to social cohesion at the community level is remarkable and remains indispensable.

Umushyikirano

The National Dialogue Council (Umushyikirano) is another example of participatory and inclusive governance. It is a forum whereby the president of the republic meets with the representatives of all Rwandans down to the grassroots level to exchange ideas and debate issues relating to the state of the nation, local government and national unity in order to find solutions. It is an opportunity for all Rwandans to share ideas on the development process of the country; even those who are not present are given the floor through technology platforms and channels (radio, TV and social media). Rwandans from different walks of life can discuss their problems together towards a common understanding about the issues the country is facing and how to address them. Each year, the dialogue has specific objectives and themes for discussion, with unity and reconciliation at the core. Through this forum,

crucial decisions are made towards sustainable development as envisioned in Vision 2020 and the EDPRS.

Umwiherero

Umwiherero (Leadership Retreat) is a strategic planning and evaluation exercise assessing the country's performance and how services are delivered. It brings together the government's senior leadership to look back on the previous year and set priorities for the year ahead *vis-à-vis* the country's progress towards achieving Vision 2020. Chaired by the president, the annual retreat is attended by the heads of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, senior members of the judiciary and the army, the prime minister and Cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries, along with public agency representatives, ambassadors, governors, the mayor of the city of Kigali and district mayors. The leadership retreat has been and remains a relevant mechanism that provides leaders with a favourable platform for reflection and self-evaluation and accountability with regard to issues pertaining notably towards the necessary measures for the implementation of policies. Experience reveals that this annual forum, now going into its 14th round, has been a strong tool to redress areas of low performance.

Against this backdrop of innovative home-grown solutions, Rwanda has been described as an example of how supervision, inspection, evaluation and feedback mechanisms can be successfully deployed alongside more traditional, culturally embedded means of enforcing performance contracts (through incentives and sanctions), accountability and obligations (Rodriguez Pose and Samuels, 2011).

Institutional development

As mentioned earlier, after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda required the rebuilding from scratch of capacity at all levels. To enable Rwanda to achieve Vision 2020 goals, successive public service reforms have been implemented to improve institutional and individual capacity for increased efficiency and effectiveness. These were to lead to the effective implementation of policies and result in consistently improved service delivery. From this goal stemmed public service reforms with two main components — namely, capacity-building and institutional reviews.

It is worth reiterating that the aim of undertaking these reforms was to streamline government efficiency and transparency and to eliminate bureaucracy so as to serve people and businesses better and faster. Public service reform implementation tools have included new policies, processes and systems geared towards improving human resource management and motivation, power delegation, public funds management, accountability, result-oriented practices and simplification of administrative procedures, among others.

The Government of Rwanda also recognises the imperative of developing the country's workforce and creating strong, accountable and performing organisations in order to be able to realise its development ambitions. Reforms have played a paramount role in ensuring effective, timely and quality service delivery in the public service. The outcomes of public sector reform include decentralisation of services close to the community to improve access, quality and delivery time. In this regard, small administrative entities have been empowered to deliver services previously not available at such a level.

Service delivery has been improved through the merging of agencies and departments with similar agenda to enhance coordination and synergy. Public sector reform has also led to the institutionalisation and continuous improvement of the performance management system.

The country has also invested heavily in the capacity-building of its human resources. Rwanda understood that capacity-building was an essential ingredient in delivering on its national development agenda. However, in the past, capacity-building efforts in the country have been characterised by standalone, overlapping and duplicative interventions, leading to inefficiency and wastage of resources. This was impeding implementation and thus compromising the achievement of national development targets.

Rwanda's response to this challenge was the establishment of the National Capacity Building Secretariat to coordinate capacity-building priorities and the pulling together of resources from different institutions and development partners to constitute a common fund for all capacity-building interventions.

Aware that capacity development could not be concerned solely with capacity creation but needed also to consider capacity use and retention, the government adopted a 'pay and retention' approach, now being gradually and successfully implemented to curb the movement of capacity created in the public service into better-paid sectors.

Another strategic option is that of talent identification. Highly talented individuals are sourced for jobs or sent to world-class universities in order to bridge the critical skills gap in high-potential and specialised areas of study. Meanwhile, under the innovative Strategic Capacity-Building Initiative, the government hires highly specialised foreign expertise to team with local potential highflyers to enable the transfer of knowledge and expertise through coaching and mentoring over a long period of time.

Coordination mechanism

Rwanda's success in policy implementation has been reflected in its consistent and coherent manner of managing, coordinating and harmonising the interventions of all actors including development partners, the private sector,

civil society and international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), thus mutually reinforcing policy reforms and implementation strategies (Chambers, 2012).

This has been possible through clear guidelines and implementation plans; multi-sectoral stakeholder involvement; effective feedback and monitoring systems; a cluster mechanism; different coordination platforms; and technical committees to ensure effective policy design and implementation at both central and local government levels. Tools include sector working groups, the sector-wide approach, technical sub-groups or taskforces, the Integrated Development Programme Steering Committee, the Development Partners Coordination Group, the Development Partners Meeting, the Joint Sector Review and the Joint Action Development Forum (national and local level) (Duke and Bizoza, 2012; Bizoza et al., 2014). It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned mechanisms were devised to ensure active involvement of all stakeholders, including the private sector, through the whole delivery chain, from planning to implementation, to as to significantly increase the level of ownership, key to effective implementation.

These fora facilitate the coordination of inter-sectoral activities and improve transparency between the government and development partners in leveraging resources, implementing and monitoring progress. They have also ensured the proper coordination of development partners' interventions, hence significantly reducing duplication in public service delivery. This has been possible through a division of labour strategy whereby development partners are given and approve areas of intervention depending on where they have more interest and expertise compared with others. Another enabling factor is a clear development planning process that links all levels of programme planning and implementation.

The two most important policies designed to contribute to coordination and harmonisation are the National Decentralisation Policy and the Community Development Policy. Through the National Decentralisation Policy, the state makes certain that various stakeholders are brought together (coordination) from the national to the local (district) level. They work together based on jointly established priorities for the welfare of the poor through effective implementation of the Community Development Policy (Ministry of Local Government, 2008b, 2012).

Rwanda's success in policy implementation is also attributed to the reaction of donors and NGOs, which have agreed to adopt 'best fit' or 'good fit' approaches. This means working with existing institutions in a way that is sensitive to Rwandan and specific sectors' realities rather than trying to import 'best practice' institutions that may not fit the context. The capacity to create coordination mechanisms that effectively engage development partners

is indicative of Rwanda's reputation of being able to pursue its own agenda, acting as a 'true partner' and encouraging the coordination of aid at central and local levels (Rodriguez Pose and Samuels, 2011).

The resulting effectiveness in policy implementation has led to Rwanda being ranked Africa's most efficient government, followed by Mauritius and South Africa, and the seventh most efficient globally, by the Global Competitiveness Report 2015–16.

2.1.5 Challenges

In spite of Rwanda's record achievements and success stories, the country is well aware of the challenges to its development path, which effectively create room for further opportunities and developmental breakthroughs. There are still untapped opportunities in many areas that have the great potential to further boost development. The country looks forward to making more strides in the social sector, where more efforts are required. Resource constraints are still an impediment to the country's development pace, and public service capacity is not yet at its full potential. However, although challenges remain, lessons learnt from the epic journey already travelled represent a strong platform from which to maintain Rwanda's development momentum.

2.1.6 Lessons learnt and recommendations

From the ruins of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda's experience shows that progress is possible even in difficult circumstances. Four key elements stand out from Rwanda's experience that other countries can adapt and implement to improve the lives of their citizens.

'Going with the grain' or 'best fit' rather than 'best practice': Drawing on traditional practices that are participatory to develop and formalise administrative frameworks has been a particularly successful strategy in implementing policies in Rwanda. While developing policies and national commitment to improve the lives of citizens has been critical to progress, the process of translating these national targets and policies into action on the ground has been Rwanda's biggest success. Rwanda has productively made use of traditional practices and pro-poor programmes to deal with development issues.

For example, harnessing Imihigo, a tradition that Rwanda has institutionalised as a means of enhancing local government reform and strengthening ownership and accountability, has made it easier for the government to implement national policies and strategies through decentralised networks that reach right down to the smallest administrative

unit in each village. Similarly, Ubudehe, based on the tradition of mutual assistance, has enabled the provision of a successful network that has helped the government target and support poor households. These traditional practices and programmes not only build on and enforce the idea of collective action, cooperation and mutual assistance and the mentality of self-reliance, reducing dependency, but also foster a spirit of competitiveness and are a crucial institutional vehicle for communication between citizens and government. These approaches have proven useful, particularly in post-conflict circumstances, but should be considered under specific contexts (from best practice to good fit).

Forging good governance supported at all levels of decentralisation:

Translating national policies and strategies into results on the ground is critical to effective policy implementation. However, these gains are only possible if there is good governance in place. In Rwanda, support here comes from the very top, with the government identifying decentralisation as a key approach to reducing poverty under national poverty reduction strategies, the Community Development Policy and the National Decentralisation Policy. This level of support was unprecedented and was critical in implementing policies at local level. While devolution may begin at the centre, it must find equally willing expression at all levels if it is to cascade down to the ground level.

Forging a result-based spirit: Rwanda's success has proven to be dependent on the country leadership's will to create and sustain the culture of results. Echoing wider observations about the role of strong and results-based leadership in Rwanda's broader developmental success, it is worth noting that strong political leadership, from the president down to village level, has been a critical impetus for healthy reforms in the post-genocide period. The capacity to cooperatively engage donors is indicative of Rwanda's reputation of being able to pursue its own agenda, acting as a 'true partner' and encouraging the coordination of aid at central and local levels.

Coordinating activities and harmonising interventions: Rwanda's successful implementation of policies has also been reflected in consistent national and local-level objectives, and mutually reinforcing policy reforms and implementation strategies. A significant factor supporting policy coherence is the fact that the government has successfully managed and coordinated all activities and harmonised all interventions of all actors (formal and informal communities, the private sector, civil society, international and local NGOs, etc.) at national and local levels. This has been possible through sector working groups at the central level and the Joint Action Development Forum at national and local level. This has largely reduced donor-driven duplication in service delivery.

2.1.7 Conclusions and recommendations

- Visionary and effective leadership is central to any country's development.
- Good and inclusive policies are vital but laws and practical strategies to translate them into reality are indispensable.
- It is necessary to build a culture of a demanding citizenry, and at the same time to spur them on to effective participation and greater ownership and ensure service delivery meets their real and not their perceived priorities.
- It is critical to encourage citizens to use local knowledge to stir home-grown solutions that can be the best remedy to delivery challenges and help ensure sustainability.
- Above all, accountability has to be institutionalised to ensure results.

Notes

- 1 The official name since 2014, according to the United Nations Security Council.
- 2 www.gov.rw/newsdetails2Speech by President Paul Kagame at the 20th Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi. Kigali, 7 April 2014

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