As Rwandans celebrate 30 years of indisputable and glaring social and economic transformation ever on the upward trend, African political leaders flock Rwanda to take a leaf from the country's mode of governance. President Paul Kagame who has been President since 2000 has presided over the government with zero tolerance to corruption, zeal to transform livelihoods, unity and reconciliation, citizen-participatory, accountability, security and ICT-knowledge-based economy and uncompromised security, giving him leverage. Kagame is the author of home-grown solutions that act as a perfect catalyst in propelling government programmes and policies.

"President Kagame puts the needs and interests of all Rwandans ahead of everything else, that is why we have confidence in him and have endorsed him as a candidate in the next year's election," said Musa Fazil Harerimana, PDI Party President.

PDI Party dominated the calls for Constitutional amendments to allow President Kagame seek a third term, winding up soon.

Politician Harerimana's observation is shared by all Rwanda's small political parties ever in coalition with RPF including the Ideal Democratic Party (PDI), Democratic Union of the Rwandan People's Party (UDPR), Prosperity and Solidarity Party (PSP) and Rwandan Socialist Party (PSR).They've all backed Kagame's candidature in the polls.

No wonder, Rwanda's ruling RPF-Inkotanyi party endorsed President Kagame last March by 99.1 per cent of votes cast as the party's flagbearer in the upcoming polls slated to take place July 15, 2024.

Looking back, the restructuring of local government alluded to above, resulted in improved service delivery following the decentralization that gave way to the creation of 30 districts including the City of Kigali from 12 prefectures.

Today, as Rwandans celebrate 30 years of indisputable and glaring social and economic transformation ever on the upward trend, African political leaders flock Rwanda to take a leaf from country's mode of governance.

Key strategies

Rwandan government through, the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) has since

2011 been collecting data in its scorecard to evaluate the country's governance based on the baseline, which includes performance contracts known locally as Imihigo (annual commitment to achieving goals set by local leaders in districts and the City of Kigali).

This scorecard looks at development indicators such as safety and security, citizen participation, political rights and civil liberties, media, civil society rights and freedoms, rule of Law, security, quality of service delivery, social justice among others.

Rwanda's post-genocide governance prioritizes the importance for citizen participation. The East African nation insists on direct citizen participation through both state-led channels as well as non-state actors including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

This is based on the study entitled "Governing with and for the citizens" conducted by Never Again Rwanda (NAR) in 2016, "State-sanctioned channels include citizens' assemblies (Inteko z' Abaturage), local councils (Inama Njyanama), Members of Parliament, National Women Council, National Youth Council, the National Dialogue, the Presidential outreach visits, as well as programs like Imihigo, Ubudehe, and Umuganda."

The study underlines that these channels have significantly improved citizen participation and social accountability.

Achievements, 30 years later

At least 91 per cent of the medium-term development strategies have successfully been implemented, a credit that may win support for the current government in the upcoming elections.

According to the Premier Édouard Ngirente, winding NST1 (2017-2024) has not been all roses as the government of Rwanda like others globally encountered unforeseen problems including the Coronavirus, climate change, natural catastrophes altogether leading to economic downturn that led to deleterious economic effects.

While addressing the 19th edition of the National Dialogue Council known locally as Umushyikirano this last January, Ngirente blamed the inadequacy in achievements

on global challenges that were beyond the control of his government, and reiterated government's commitment to continue implementing the rest of the strategies until targets are met.

In spite of the global challenges alluded to such as COVID-19, the government of Rwanda launched several measures with focus on mitigating particularly the adverse economic effects linked to the pandemic, which included supporting key sectors like Manufacturing, Agro-processing and Real estate.

Manufacturing, Agro-processing and Real estate.

The Office of the Prime Minister announced that between 2021-2023 the GoR implemented a two-year Manufacture and Build to Recover Programme (MBRP) to boost economic recovery efforts, which extended the time it was set to close. Through MBRP, the GoR had mobilized investments totaling $1.75 billion and created over 36,000 jobs as of 2022 exceeding the targets by 150% and 132% respectively.

With such interventions the country maintained economic growth of 6,9 per cent from 2017 up to the third quarter of 2023.

To mitigate effects of rising commodity prices on the international markets caused by high prices of petroleum, government provided subsidies on petroleum products and public transport alongside subsidizing industrial fertilizers.

The government purchased 200 buses, 100 of them arrived recently to address the shortage of buses that affected public transport, and the programme that started in the in the City of Kigali will roll out to provinces revealed Ngirente, Premier Édouard Ngirente during the 19th edition of the National Dialogue Council known locally as Umushyikirano this last January.

Agriculture

During the last 30 years, Rwanda has invested massively in Agriculture the main economic activity to larger proportion of the population. And, it would be far-reaching to uplift the living standards of her people without directing ample resources into the sector.

To this effect, cultivatable land increased to 71,000ha up from 48,000ha in 2017. Investments in commercial modern farming like Gabiro Agribusiness Hub, Nasho

and Mpanga irrigation schemes in the Eastern Province are some of the initiatives that account for the rise in arable land.

The amount of fertilizers used per hectare annually rose in the last seven years to 70.3Kgs up from 32Kgs in 2017, and the rise translated in increase in productivity per unit of land, placing Rwanda in the lead in Sub-Saharan Africa where 25Kgs are used per hectare annually.

The fertilizer blending plant in Bugesera with a capacity of producing 100,000 tons complements other fertilizers' factories in ensuring sustainable supply, and the country stopped importing hybrid seeds in 2021.

Efforts meant to fight soil erosion were heightened between 2017 – 2024 leading to completion of terraces covering 1,147,434 hectares. The shortage in milk production was substantively narrowed and currently more than one million liters up from some 700,000 in 2017, and a milk processing plant with a 650,000 litre capacity per day.

Construction

The Infrastructure Ministry presided over the construction over 1,600Kms of roads connecting provinces. The roads include Base-Rukomo-Nyagatare, Kagitumba-Kayonza-Rusumo, Ngoma-Bugesera-Nyanza, Huye-Kibeho and Pindura-Bweyeye. In addition, some 237Kms of new roads were constructed in the City of Kigali and secondary cities. Such efforts aimed at boosting the movement of goods and people.

About 3,700 Kms of feeder roads, above the target of 3,000Kms, were constructed to help mostly farmers access markets across the country. While floodlights were installed along more than 2,160Kms of roads in cities falling below the target of 2,400Kms and the Premier told over 1,500 delegates at the 19th National Dialogue Council that the programme was ongoing.

During the implementation of NST1, over 1.5 million new households accessed electricity increasing the number of household accessing the facility from 34.4% to 74%. And, in effort to increase to safe and clean water, seven processing plants were constructed including Nzove Kanzenze, Gihira, Kanyonyomba, Mwoya, Nkombo and Nyankora as a result the amount of water processed per day nearly doubled. Besides, more than 1,800 water pipes were installed in the cities and over 2,000 in

rural areas.

ICT and Education

Access to internet services increased following an increase in the kilometres of Fiber optic cable from 3,300 Kms in 2017 to 15,000.

Other key sectors that registered milestones in the last seven years include Health, Education and Manufacturing.

By 1994, some 2,870 Rwandans held university degrees. Today, the number has raised to 431,606 graduates according to data announced in 2022. This exponential growth in education is a testament to Rwanda's commitment to its greatest asset – its people especially the youth.

In addition, Rwanda has expanded educational infrastructures and restructured education systems through the creation of Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the High Education Council (HEC) that not only oversee the implementation of education programmes but also ensure equality in access to quality education is achieved, a departure to selective systems masterminded by the genocide regimes to sideline the Tutsis.

Relatedly, to ensure that all Rwandans access education, which is a right of every child Rwanda introduced the 12 –year basic, free and universal programme. This ensured that there is a Secondary school at sector level.

Women Emancipation and Youth Empowerment

Rwanda is a champion of women's empowerment. In 1993, women held a mere 14.9% of Parliamentary seats. Today, they're a dominant force, occupying over 61.4% – among highest globally. This dramatic shift highlights Rwanda's commitment to gender equality.

And, Rwanda's women Constitutionally boast of a 50% share, a decision reached to promote equality of women and men in decision-making.

The 2003 Constitution amended in 2015 promotes the representation of youth in different administrative entities, an ambition that led to the creation of the National Youth Council. In addition, Rwanda's Parliament has two youth representatives voted by the youth in addition to other MPs falling in the youth age category.

The Cabinet appointments have also included youth holding high level leadership positions in the government.

By and large, the government has registered evident gains in all sectors including water and electricity, health, media, trade, industry, civil society and environment.