By Francis Byaruhanga

Rwanda has undergone remarkable reconstruction over the past 30 years, making strides in economic, social, and political spheres. Various factors have contributed to these successes, ranging from the private sector to non-governmental organizations. Among the key players in this development are businessmen, who have made significant contributions.

One such individual is Jean Marie Vianney Ndahimana, the Chief Executive Officer of COFATOLE Ltd, whose entrepreneurship and management skills have played a pivotal role in Rwanda's economic progress.

Following the country's liberation, spearheaded by the RPF-Inkotanyi, Rwanda embarked on a journey of unity and reconciliation, urging its citizens to actively participate in the nation's rebuilding process. Recognizing the pivotal role of construction in this endeavor, Ndahimana embraced the sector, which had been ravaged by the atrocities of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Jean Marie Vianney Ndahimana's unwavering commitment to construction was fueled by the indomitable spirit of the Rwandan people, resolute in their determination to rebuild their homeland from the ashes of tragedy. From the bustling streets of Kigali to the farthest reaches of the country and even neighboring Burundi, Ndahimana lent his expertise to erecting diverse structures that would serve as beacons of hope and progress.

Jean Marie Vianney Ndahimana, the Chief Executive Officer of COFATOLE Ltd

His hard work and timely tax contributions has earned awards. COFATOLE, a manufacturer of iron sheets and other related construction materials, has been recognized by Rwanda Revenue Authority as best taxpayer in 2023, this was during the 21st Taxpayers Appreciation Day ceremony held in Kigali.

After years of dedicated service to the construction sector, he envisioned a new frontier: manufacturing. With a keen eye for innovation, he spearheaded the establishment of a factory aimed at producing essential construction materials.

Founded in 2012 by Ndahimana, COFATOLE Ltd operates from its headquarters in

Gahanga, Kicukiro District in the City of Kigali, catering to both local and regional markets.

Despite encountering initial hurdles, including a shortage of capital, Ndahimana navigated the challenges with resilience backed by the country's favorable policies and business environment that facilitated access to crucial financial resources.

Indeed, it is within this nurturing ecosystem of supportive policies and strategic partnerships that Ndahimana's vision flourished. COFATOLE Ltd got a bank loan and built a factory.

Today, COFATOLE Ltd stands as a testament to the transformative power of a conducive business environment, where innovation thrives, and success knows no bounds. Through his unwavering dedication and foresight, Ndahimana has not only shaped the landscape of Rwanda's construction industry but has also inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs who dare to dream and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Ndahimana's contributions has created employment opportunities where more than 60 workers are permanent at the factory and more are indirectly employed by the activities of his business ventures.

The company stands tall as one of Rwanda's leading manufacturer of iron sheets and related construction materials, the factory's crown jewel is **Tembo brand**, with others such as **Azinc,** and **Prepainted Iron sheets** in different colors and categories. The factory also produces **corrugated roofing sheets** in different sizes based on customer preferences.

Importing raw materials from China, India, Kenya, the company maintains strong relationships with suppliers and clients, ranging from large traders to public and private companies.

Despite competition in the construction sector, the company has managed to navigate challenges and expand market reach, even exporting to neighboring countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

JESPO2 Ltd: Introducing the first Organic Beer to the Rwandan Market

Recognizing Rwanda’s growing hospitality sector, Ndahimana diversified into the beverage industry by founding JESPO2 Ltd. The company envisioned introducing unique products and services to the Rwandan market.

JESPO2 Ltd introduced a unique organic beer brand with international certifications and accolades for quality. This premium beer produced by Belgian-based Les Brasseries de Flobecq comes in three types: Red Flo, Yellow Flo, and Flo 58.

The distinctive organic beer was launched at the Kigali Convention Centre in October 2023 at an event graced by local authorities, the Belgian Ambassador to Rwanda, EU officials, European partners and the business community.

The Founder of JESPO2 Ltd emphasizes that, “Its completely organic. This beer boasts quality that has been meticulously inspected and certified by international beverage experts.”

The Flo brand has already secured a top spot in the Rwandan market. It received an award from the renowned Karisimbi Events for being the best organic beer in Africa.

Beer enthusiasts warmly welcomed the new organic beer, the first of its kind in the Rwandan market, free from any chemical additives.

Flo brand beer, the first of its kind to be introduced in Rwanda and the region is now available at its main distribution office at Silverback mall in Kicukiro, First-Class Hotels, Mantis group of hotels, Catholic hospitality establishments and different supermarkets nationwide.

JESPO2 Ltd has strategic plans to open a factory to manufacture this premium beer locally in collaboration with European partners. This venture aligns with Rwanda’s national agenda of made in Rwanda.

With this innovative approach to brewing, JESPO2 Ltd seeks to offer Rwandans and visitors alike a premium beverage experience that not only delights the palate but also promotes health and sustainability.

Looking back, Ndahimana credits the support of the RPF Inkotanyi for his personal and business growth, from his involvement as a young cadre during the struggle to liberate the country to his current success. He acknowledges the conducive business environment created by President Kagame’s governance, which facilitated infrastructure development and industrial growth.

Ndahimana’s aspirations extend beyond business success; he hopes to continue partnering with the government for further development, emphasizing the importance of essential amenities and ongoing efforts to enhance security and stability.