By Jejje Muhinde;

The Rwanda Cricket Association has announced a final 18-player women's national cricket team squad for this year's annual Kwibuka 20T Tournament.

The tournament which is expected to take place from the 6-12 June at the Gahanga Stadium in Kigali will see the host Rwanda battle the likes of Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Nigeria and Botswana.

According to the RCA, the final 18 were selected from the players picked by head coach Leonard Nhamburo who signed up to the task early this year.

The Nhamburo final squad is a blend of experience and youth with some familiar names interspersed with first-time national team players.

Sarah Uwera is once again leading the team as captain alongside experienced lieutenants Cathia Uwamahoro, Diane Ishimwe, Josiane Uwimbabazi, Marie Diane Bimenyimana, Delphine Mukarurangwa and Flora Irakoze.

The notable player Ishimwe Gisele and former under-18 girl national team also finds a spot in the team making her to be among the younger players to wear the prestigious green and yellow colours of Rwanda.

Henriette Ishiwme, Alice Ikuze and Sifa Ingabire have been named by coach Nhamburo.

Initially it was announced that only five women's teams will participate in this T20I league which are Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Nigeria and Botswana but later it was confirmed that three times champion Kenya (2015, 2017, 2018) would also participate which makes it more exciting and thrilling to watch.

Botswana, Nigeria and Namibia are the newest inclusions while defending champions Tanzania will miss this season.

Two times champion Uganda (2014 & 2016) will be hoping for another clinical season by depending on their highest runs scorer (Rita Musamali) and wicket taker (Joyce Apio) of the last tournament.

A total of 14 matches are scheduled to be played in the double round-robin format with the playoffs. The teams are placed in two groups namely A & B consisting of

three teams each which include: Group A contains Rwanda, Botswana and Uganda. Group B is composed of Kenya, Namibia and Nigeria.

The host will take on Botswana on the opening day before meeting Uganda on day three. Kenya will face off with Nigeria on the first while Uganda will play their second game against Botswana while Namibia battle Nigeria on Day two.

Held on an annual basis since its inception in 2014, the tournament had to be cancelled last year due to the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The T20 is a laudable initiative by RCA to commemorate the millions of lives lost during the heinous Rwandan genocide.

The 2019 edition featured women’s teams from regional neighbors Uganda, Tanzania as well as newcomers Mali competing against the hosts in a double round robin league format.