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For Huye District, not much will seem to hold back as a green growth led Secondary City given its enormous advantages, most especially the strategic location that puts it in a better spot for socioeconomic transformation.



Catching up with Mayor Ange Sebutege, Rwanda Dispatch's Steven Tumusime talked to him about Huye's current performance and developments to reclaim its position as the true secondary city.

Mayor Sebutege asserts that, the resolve to work together with all stakeholders as a team was the catalyst that propelled them to greater performance and intends to continue stir forward for more achievements in the face of challenges that still derail the city to claim its iconic position in the South.

He shares what truly endeared Huye's recent high performance and what lies ahead especially achieving goals as aligned in Imihigo and guided by the District Development Strategy paper. Huye was ranked the 2nd best performing district in Imihigo 2022/2023.

Huye District has always been a popular mention by many, at times referred to as second to the capital Kigali. However, much is not known given that there are no official ratings of cities in the country.



However, it was chosen as one of Rwanda's secondary cities to relieve urban pressures on Kigali and promote urbanization expected to reach 35% by 2024. This

was aimed at stirring economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction in the country's journey to development.

Huye is on the right track to guarantee a brighter future that will ensure sustainable economic growth helped by factors like the district's strategic location, its potentialities in scaring up skills development, trade and industry, agriculture, heritage and culture based tourism.

Commanding strategic position in the Southern region

According to the Mayor, the dominating factor for future growth is drawn from Huye's strategic location in the wider space of the country's Geo-positioning. The district is literally at the center of adjacent districts in the southern province as well as strategically closer to some of trading hubs in the neighboring countries of Burundi and DRC.

The district has a competitive edge to explore positioning itself as trading hub for the South and beyond.

The Mayor emphasizes that this strategic position has proved to be a game changer in bid to grow the district's economy as they look to be a commercial and trading center linking neighboring districts and countries to Rwanda's finest products especially those manufactured in Huye.



Illustrated in it's infrastructure development, hospitality establishments are sprouting while road networks have improved, for example the connection to Burundi's capital Bujumbura is the closest commercial point for Rwanda's southern neighbor. Interestingly, South Kivu capital Bukavu in the DRC is also better positioned to trade with, all in same time range as traveling to Kigali.

With the established industrial park, merging of resources by local investors such as Huye Trading Company to put up needed structures like construction of a modern mall is underway. Huye city will no doubt stand as an iconic trading hub and this is expected to contribute to the economic growth that is currently driven by coffee production whose brands such as Malaba Coffee, Huye Mountain Coffee continues to feature on international markets.

Center of Excellence in skills development

Huye has always been uniquely identified as an exceptional center of education given the various presence of higher institutions of learning and great performances at all levels. It was historically known for hosting the country's highest education center, Butare University that has since changed to University of Rwanda (UR), the National Institute of Scientific Research, IPRC South, PIASS and Nyakibanda Major Seminary, among others.



This positions the city as a centre of academia for housing these famous institutions and some of the leading and first training schools and colleges established in the country.

These higher institutions of learning potentially provide the needed momentum for the district's aspirations as a center of excellence in skills development.

Green based city promotes sports and hospitality

Green based economies have gained momentum in the face of climate change challenges that gradually affect the quality of life for populations. Rwanda is ensuring a green growth led economy as one of its priorities in view of contributing to greater public good and support quality life for citizens.

For Huye District, all must be done to go green. The target is full implementation of the new city's master plan meant to guide its green growth undertakings and provide guidance on best practices in land use management.



The Master Plan only awaits gazetting for its implementation. But even before that, the city has already set in motion initiatives that align to green growth policies. They include setting up of open green spaces, afforestation, protection of natural resources, especially water sources and catchment areas, as well as encouraging sports and city walks instead of relying on vehicles that emit lots of carbon gases.

So far the City is known for its walk lanes, that have improved city ambient life and sports among its dwellers. This complements historical attractions in Huye like massive cathedrals and churches, some architectures in the city centre going back to the colonial era, an Arboretum on Ruhande Hill, 'gene bank' adjacent to UR, Kwa Nyagakecuru Mubisi bya Huye and the excellent National Ethnographic Museum

among others.

