

President Paul Kagame said Thursday that leaders who fail to fulfill their responsibilities, despite being given necessary resources, must be held accountable and, if needed, required to repay funds.

Kagame made the remarks as he opened the 20th National Dialogue Conference at the Kigali Convention Center, where government officials, security leaders, youth representatives and representatives of Rwandans living abroad gathered to review the country's progress and set priorities for the future.

The annual conference is designed to assess the nation's achievements and challenges, and to encourage shared responsibility among citizens and leaders.



"Rwandans look up to us as leaders," Kagame said. "They expect a lot from what we do, not just temporary improvements or vague hope. Progress must be real and sustainable."

The President said citizens should not accept poor governance or political failures as normal, as had happened for many years in the past. He added that some people seek power and status, and that achieving these goals requires vigilance and commitment from all Rwandans.

He said leaders must be held accountable for how they use public resources.

"You are given resources in the interest of all Rwandans and how did you use them?" Kagame asked. "Did you treat them as your own? Did they reach the intended beneficiaries? You must be held accountable, and if necessary, repay."

He acknowledged that misconduct sometimes goes unnoticed, but said those found responsible should face consequences.

"Where it is known, the person should be held accountable," he said. "There are many issues we have resolved, but others remain unresolved, preventing us from making significant progress."

Kagame also criticized delays in government projects, saying they harm citizens and reflect poor coordination and weak oversight by responsible agencies. He said some projects were planned but never completed because institutions failed to collaborate during the planning phase.

“If a project has started, it must be monitored to ensure it is progressing,” he said. “You find projects have stalled or move slowly, and we all know this. These are issues we have lived with for many years.”

He said some projects intended to be completed in two years end up taking three or four, while citizens continue to work without receiving wages. He described such delays as unacceptable.

“Those who lead these projects often benefit more than the citizens,” he said. “Accountability is not about giving a convenient answer. Ministers must follow up on matters that are moving slowly.”

President Kagame said Rwanda will not relent in demanding accountability from leaders and urged citizens to monitor projects to ensure they progress as intended.

His remarks come as Rwanda continues efforts to strengthen governance and improve service delivery while maintaining a tight grip on political authority.