

President Paul Kagame on Wednesday warned newly appointed government officials that repeated failures to deliver on agreed responsibilities could lead to their removal, urging them to put the interests of the country and citizens above personal considerations.

Kagame made the remarks at Village Urugwiro in Kigali after receiving the oath of office from new ministers and senior officials appointed to government and other state institutions.

Those sworn in included Damien Murwanashyaka, appointed minister of infrastructure; Antoine Marie Kajangwe, appointed minister of trade and industry; Claudien Bizimungu, appointed minister of state in charge of infrastructure; and Armand Zingiro, appointed minister of state in the ministry of infrastructure.

Others included Judith Mbabazi, appointed deputy ombudsman responsible for preventing and fighting injustice; James Wizeye, appointed deputy secretary general of the National Intelligence and Security Service; and CP Theos Badege, appointed deputy commissioner general of the Rwanda Correctional Service.

Kagame said officials are often given opportunities to correct mistakes, but repeated failures to implement agreed plans eventually require action.

“Some people may think ministers are being changed quickly,” Kagame said. “Yes, they are being changed quickly, but ask yourself why.”

He said government leaders regularly agree on programmes and timelines, but problems arise when some officials fail to follow through despite having the necessary support and resources.

“We come here for government meetings, we make plans and say, ‘This is what we are going to do,’” Kagame said. “Everyone contributes ideas, we agree, and everything needed is available. But when the time comes and we ask where we have reached, sometimes the person responsible does not even know.”



The president said leaders may initially be forgiven because mistakes can happen, but repeated failure shows a deeper problem.

“The first time, you may overlook it because people make mistakes,” Kagame said.

“But when the same mistake happens again and again, then there is a serious problem.”

He said the country has many capable citizens who can take on responsibilities when officials fail to meet expectations.

“There are many Rwandans who can do the work we do here,” he said.

Kagame also reminded the new leaders that public office is a responsibility to serve citizens, not a position for personal benefit.

“Being a leader in these institutions is, first and foremost, about serving citizens and working for their well-being,” he said.

He warned officials against putting their own interests first and forgetting that they are serving the country.

“We are serving a country, not competing against one another,” Kagame said. “The interests of the nation must always come first.”

The president said poor leadership decisions affect citizens first because they bear the consequences of failures.

“Before poor performance affects the leader, it has already affected the citizens,” he said.

He added that when leaders serve the country well, they also benefit from the progress created, but citizens should remain the first beneficiaries.

Kagame also recalled Rwanda’s history, saying the sacrifices made during the liberation struggle should guide today’s leaders.

He said members of the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) who liberated the country in July 1994 were driven by the desire to protect the nation, not by personal rewards.

“If they had been thinking only about themselves and their own interests, Rwanda would not have reached where it is today,” Kagame said.

He said those who fought did so knowing they could lose their lives, without expecting salaries or other personal benefits.

Kagame said today's public servants are not being asked to make the same sacrifice but should show commitment and dedication in their responsibilities.

"Today, our work does not require us to lose our lives," he said. "We go to work knowing we will return home safely. That history should guide us in what we do every day."

He urged the officials to work with colleagues and other institutions to solve challenges facing government programmes.

"When you face problems at work, find ways to solve them," Kagame said. "Work with others, whether those you lead or people in other institutions."

The president encouraged the newly sworn-in officials to remember the oath they had taken and understand the importance of their duties.

He warned that leaders can easily lose focus when they forget the purpose of their responsibilities.

"Temptations are many and people can forget quickly," Kagame said. "Remember what we have discussed because it can bring you back to the right path."