

Rwanda needs a stronger private sector to expand local production and reduce reliance on imports, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) said Friday as Expo 2026 came to a close.

MINICOM Permanent Secretary Chantal Tuyishimire said increasing locally made products would help narrow the country's trade deficit, create jobs and strengthen the economy.

Speaking at the closing ceremony and awards for outstanding exhibitors, Tuyishimire urged businesses to focus not only on producing more but also on meeting international quality standards.

"Made in Rwanda" should extend beyond food and clothing to all products that can be manufactured locally, she said.

"We still import many products, and we all have a responsibility to work together to reduce these imports because there are many things the world needs that can be made by us," Tuyishimire said.



She linked the call to Rwanda's second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), which seeks to accelerate economic development, saying the country still faces a significant gap between exports and imports.

Tuyishimire also encouraged businesses to use trade fairs as a platform to improve their products and reach international markets.

"We do not want you to stop here; we want you to reach every corner of the world," she said.

Jibu Rwanda, which won the top award at Expo 2026, said the exhibition also provided an opportunity to better understand customers and improve its approach to business.

Company CEO Bruno Tuyisenge said visitors raised questions about the water products it offers, giving the company an opportunity to better explain them.

Mwamikazi Theonestine, who finished second among the top exhibitors, said the recognition had encouraged her to expand her business, noting that private-sector

growth contributes to national development.

The 29th edition of Expo hosted 494 exhibitors, including 373 Rwandan businesses and 121 exhibitors from 14 other countries.

The Private Sector Federation also recognized partners that supported the organization of the exhibition, including Rwanda Printery Company Ltd.