President Kagame on Monday attended the 71st World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland where he delivered a keynote address at the High-Level segment on Universal Health Coverage. The assembly is the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The President also graced the Opening Ceremony of the Assembly alongside President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset, President of the 71st World Health Assembly David Parirenyatwa, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva Michael Møller.

In his address, President Kagame shared Rwanda's journey towards Universal Health Coverage. He noted that a combination of community-based health insurance, community health workers, and good external partnerships led to the steepest reductions in child and maternal mortality ever recorded across the country.

"The key was an approach that put individuals and communities at the centre. In choosing this path, Rwanda learned from others who preceded us, and we also benefited greatly from advice and support from the World Health Organization. Integrating digital applications and new technologies into our health system has also made a difference, and we are now using drone aircraft to quickly deliver blood and medical supplies to rural hospitals," President Kagame said.

President Kagame further pointed out that today more than 90 percent of Rwandans are enrolled in health insurance with government subsidizing only one-third of the cost while two-thirds are covered by contributions from beneficiaries. He added that Rwanda has kept on expanding the network of volunteer Community Health Workers, who are present in every village and serve as an essential link between the population and health facilities.

Attended by delegations from 194 WHO member states, the gathering discusses a number of issues including the organization's five-year strategic plan to help countries meet the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).