On October 19, a live webinar event was organized by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) to celebrate recent successes to increase access to literacy materials for students with disabilities, and to discuss commitments to further this work.

During the webinar, which took place amidst the ongoing celebrations of Rwanda's National Literacy Month, USAID Soma Umenye unveiled video storybooks presented with Rwanda sign language, and committed to partnering with the Government of Rwanda to finalize a Rwanda Sign Language Dictionary and a standardized Kinyarwanda braille code.

Participants in the webinar included the Director General of Rwanda Education Board (REB), representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Rwanda, senior officials from the Rwanda Education Board (REB), and representatives from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), USAID Soma Umenye, National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), Rwanda Union for the Blind (RUB), Rwanda National Union of the Deaf (RNUD), National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR), USAID Umurimo Kuri Bose, USAID Mureke Dusome, and other organizations which are actively supporting education for children with disabilities in Rwanda.

Samuel Munana, the Executive Director of Rwanda National Union of the Deaf (RNUD), appreciated USAID Soma Umenye's achievement, explaining, "Turning the 54 Andika Rwanda titles into sign language videos and braille books is a tremendous contribution to inclusive education. These materials give children with disabilities the opportunity to read the same stories that other children read."

In his closing remarks, Dr. Ndayambaje, the Director General of REB said: "We praise the recent contributions and ongoing commitments to support literacy for children with disabilities. As efforts are ongoing to increase the availability of accessible digital materials for students with disabilities, we'll continue to encourage teachers and parents to use the books." Digital readers can be accessed from REB's e-learning platform (https://elearning.reb.rw/).

When asked about USAID's commitment to inclusive education, USAID's Mission Director in Rwanda, Leslie Marbury explained, "USAID is partnering with the Government of Rwanda to accelerate achievement of our shared goal to meet the learning needs of every child in Rwanda and create a society in which people with disabilities participate fully. A component of successful inclusion is ensuring that schools are accessible in terms of communication, including sign language

environments with signing peers and resources in Braille. USAID and GOR’s work on the sign language dictionary, development of the signed storybooks, and standardization of the Kinyarwanda Braille code are critical steps toward this goal.”