President Paul Kagame, the Chairman of RPF Inkotanyi party was Saturday nominated as presidential candidate for the July polls. Kagame was endorsed at the party congress that convened over 2,000 party members.

“I want to thank our guests, including leaders of political organisations and other national leaders who are here with us. It is a demonstration of the diversity we embrace in our journey to rebuild our country. The only reason I reluctantly accept to continue with this responsibility is the specific context of our country”, president Kagame said in his acceptance speech.

“The burden of responsibility to lead our country can be equated to a shock absorber against the challenges we face daily. It requires the right mindset. I accept this burden of responsibility, but with a call to get someone to relieve me of this responsibility. That someone can only come from amongst you”, he added.

Kagame, 66, has been president of Rwanda since 2000. In 2017, he was re-elected to the office after claiming a land-slide victory of more than 98 percent of the vote.

The RPF Vice Chairperson Uwimana Consolée said that this is great a moment to celebrate the achievements of the party over the last 30 years : “I want to thank you Chairman, as the Commander in Chief of our armed forces for saving our lives and giving it a purpose; that of building our nation. I am thanking you on my own behalf and on behalf of those who are not here with us today.”

She said that RPF presented a list of 70 candidates who were arranged by alphabetical order : “It’s not by order of priority to make it to parliament as that will be determined by the ballot. And this is a call for all of us to vigorously campaign for our party candidates.”

While presenting the party achievements over the past seven years, RPF Secretary General Wellars Gasamagera said that despite the Covid-19 pandemic that blighted this period, the party managed to deliver on most of the promises made to Rwandans especially in the sphere of economic development and social welfare.

Under the infrastructure component, he said that Rwanda managed to increase electricity connectivity, improved road network and built world-class sports complexes including BK Arena, Pele Stadium and Amahoro National Stadium which is nearing completion. The country also built a state-of-the-art golf course in Kigali.

“Under the economic pillar, the past seven years saw a significant improvement. In 2019 before the Covid-19 outbreak our economy was growing at 9 per cent. However, during the pandemic, we took measures to both cushioned from the devastating impact but also ensured steady recovery post-pandemic”, he added.

“In the next five years, we shall build on what we have achieved so far towards our national Vision 2050 that aims at achieving sustainable development and better quality of life for every Rwandan”, he said.

He added that the RPF leadership will also put much emphasis on continued improvement of road and air transportation with focus on green transport. Other areas of priority include leveraging AI for economic growth and boosting the quality of education.

Over 2,000 party cadres met at the RPF-Inkotanyi headquarters for the extraordinary congress that elected the party flag-bearers in the presidential and Parliamentary elections slated for July this year.

Besides party cadres, the congress has also been attended by invited guests, including leaders of other political organisations in the country and senior government officials, among others.

At the same congress, the party secretariat presented a report on how the party’s manifesto of 2017-2024 was implemented and adopted the new five-year manifesto on which the party candidates will campaign.