

Along the 28-year journey, Rwanda's achievements vividly outweigh its failures and the few lines below give an insight into the milestones that every Rwandan is proud of. Every July 4<sup>th</sup>, is Liberation Day and country looks back at its history to remember the 100-day period of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi that claimed more than one million lives and left the economy in ruins. Then, inflation and poverty rate reached a record high of 64% and 78% respectively.

This year, liberation is celebrated under the theme: "Together We Prosper" Kwibohora28 is another opportunity to celebrate a peaceful, united and prosperous nation.

Rwanda to unveil its magic in socio-economic transformation chose to belong to East African Community (EAC), and on June 18, 2007 acceded to EAC Treaty before becoming a full member of the bloc on July 1, 2007. Since then, the country that was incognito 28 years ago, has been opening its doors to the international community including Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which it joined in 2009 becoming the newest member among 54 nations.

A number of activities as part of the 28<sup>th</sup> liberation happened and we captured some highlights. Rwanda Defense Force (RDF) unveiled Rwf 22 billion model village in Nyaruguru, Karongi and Kayonza Districts. On top of its mandate of defending the territorial integrity of the country, since 2009 RDF has been involved in supporting socio-economic transformation efforts through RDF Citizen Outreach Programme.



Munini IDP Model Village inaugurated as Rwanda marks 28th Liberation Day celebration |Nyaruguru, 4 July 2022

Basically, the force's interventions centre on responses to challenges ordinary citizens encounter particularly the most vulnerable including survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

About 48 families of Nyaruguru received shelters as this year's flagship housing project, a Rwf 15.7 billion Munini Integrated Model Village was launched in the area. Among other activities, RDF also completed 32 villages for genocide survivors across all the 30 districts - worth Rwf 11 billion - a resettlement housing project in Busanza (Kigali) for 840 families and two resettlement projects in Nyagatare District worth Rwf 8.5 billion, among others.

By and large, Rwanda has grown leaps and bounds in the last 28 years in security, unity, women and youth circles.

The East African nation maintains security within its borders for her inhabitants and their property, a departure from devastating insecurity based on ethnic divisions that culminated in 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Rwandans maintained the lead as the highest scoring pillar with 95.47%, according to the 8th edition of Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS) released in November 2021. The pillar of Safety and Security came on top scoring 95.47% in 2021 from 95.44% of 2020, the Rule of Law performed at 87.08% while Political Rights and Civil liberties scored 83.80%.

Other pillars considered by this independent research body to gauge the state of governance include : Rule of Law, Political Rights and Civil liberties, Participation and Inclusiveness, Investing in Human and Social Development, Control of corruption, Transparency and Accountability, Quality of service delivery and Economic and corporate governance.

Relatedly, to ensure sustainable security and stability, and allay a repeat of the horrendous situation, Rwanda has for last 28 years mobilized her populace through unity and reconciliation programmes to appreciate the importance of unity and country boasts of a success story of unity and reconciliation today. Divisive politics based on lines of ethnicity is left in the past, and perpetrators co-exist with genocide victims in reconciliation villages, for example in Mbyo cell, Mayange Sector in Bugesera, Eastern Province. Rwandans jealously safeguard their unity and cohesion and will tip authorities in the event of genocide ideology.



About 48 families in Munini, Nyaruguru received shelters as this year's flagship housing project.

Rwanda has successfully repulsed and defeated negative forces that seek to destabilize it. The resilient country recorded success in cracking down these forces including remnants of Ex-FAR, the army of the ethnic Hutu-dominated genocide regime regrouped from the jungles of Eastern DR Congo where they've committed crimes against humanity. The genocide army has undergone several mutations and formed other terrorists groups that harbor a genocide ideology, divisionism and genocide denial some include; the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDRL) and Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (RMDC/FLN).

For the past years they've been launching attacks in Southern Province of Rwanda, killing innocent civilians. And, success in flushing them out of the area is attributed to the vigilance of the residents by providing relevant information about their infiltration.

In the same vein, Rwanda shines out as an icon of regional peacekeeping: Rwanda has used her resilience and horrible experience related to its bad history to provide workable security solutions in countries where there is devastation of humanity, which include South Sudan, Haiti, CAR and Mozambique. On the invitation of Mozambican government, Rwanda deployed in July 2021 a 1,000 troop contingent comprised of Rwanda National Police (RNP) and Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) to help deliver the war-ravaged Province of Cabo Delgado from terrorist activities that included torching houses and killing of innocent civilians to restore peace.

Rwanda has contributed troops under the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and in due course Formed Police Unit-Two (RWAFFPU-2) and its 8th rotation of RWAFFPU-1 was first deployed in the central African nation in 2014.

The country has walked the talk of every Rwandan especially women's role in development by pursuing equality of all people, enshrined in 2003 Constitution that stipulates that all Rwandans are equal regardless of their sex, religion, region, education, social class etc has also been at the centre of development. The political will to promote equality has helped the country empower women with their representation in Parliament rated over 64% and the country has maintained a gender- balanced Cabinet since 2018.

President Paul Kagame attributes decrease in gender discrimination and gender-based crimes to an increase of women in decision-making roles. Close to 86% of Rwandan women are active in the national labour market. They, also, hold over 50% percent of Cabinet positions and 61.3 percent of seats in the country's Legislature.

In relation to social protection, the government designed and continues to implement programmes that improve living standards of formerly marginalized groups- People living with disabilities (PwDs), the poorer of the poor through various programmes including Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) - is an Integrated Local Development Program to Accelerate Poverty Eradication, Rural Growth, and Social Protection. They receive basic services like education, health insurance and decent houses, and mobilized and empowered through grassroots leadership (Umurenge SACCO) to start sustainable small income generating projects.

Over the years, Rwanda has invested massively in health systems like the public health insurance buttressed by community health workers (CHWs). Hence, its proper health system was crucial in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth volunteers who helped in reinforcement of health guidelines when the pandemic plagued the economy, complimented government efforts in heightening mass sensitization about the prevention of further spread of the plague, and finally the country has contained COVID-19.

Rwanda's stance to become tourism reflected in International sports events and invaluable partnerships: Nothing is left to chance. Apart from promoting youth talents across different sports and games - from football, cycling, cricket, women football to basketball, Rwanda enormously invests in sports infrastructures and youth empowerment to interest young generation in sports. To this effect, the country merited to host international sports events like Tour du Rwanda and Basketball Africa League (BAL), both happened this year. The second consecutive BAL finals took place at Rwanda's world-class Kigali Arena from May21-28.

RDB and Visit Rwanda practically promote belief backed by a proven record that sports including Basketball can accelerate economic growth on the Continent and Rwanda is far ahead in tourism in Africa and several sports experts contend that sports can be an economic growth engine for the continent. Rwanda continues to lead the way for tourism in Africa, and this partnership highlights an African continent that is creative, vibrant, and ready to tell its story.

In a nut shell, Rwanda has invested in all sectors across her economy with glaring results in Education, ICT, Tourism, Transport, Trade and Industry.