

Rwanda's annual Umuganura festival has become a platform for discussions on social responsibility, with leaders using this year's celebrations to highlight the importance of unity, family values and responsible behaviour among citizens.

The celebrations held on Aug. 7 in Nyarugenge District brought together residents and officials to mark a tradition that has historically focused on celebrating harvests, sharing achievements and strengthening bonds within communities.

Kigali Mayor Samuel Dusengiyumva used the occasion to raise concerns over challenges affecting young people, including alcohol abuse and drug use, saying families have a key role in addressing the problems.

He said some parents are increasingly leaving the responsibility of raising children to others, warning that weak family involvement can contribute to social challenges.

"In Kigali, there are parents we call after finding their child on the streets, and they tell us to take the child because they have failed to control them. That is not the Rwanda we want," Dusengiyumva said.



Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe (photo) said Umuganura represents more than a celebration of agricultural production, describing unity as the foundation of the tradition.

"Unity is the foundation of everything we do. This country was destroyed because of a lack of unity and it has been rebuilt through unity. There can be no Umuganura without unity," Nduhungirehe said.

He said the festival reflects values including hard work, patriotism, integrity and self-reliance, while providing an opportunity for communities to celebrate achievements and discuss areas that require improvement.

Nduhungirehe also clarified the meaning of sharing traditional drinks during Umuganura celebrations, saying the practice is intended to promote friendship and social connection rather than excessive alcohol consumption.

His comments come as the government intensifies efforts to curb the consumption of unsafe alcoholic beverages.

Nduhungirehe said the festival should remain a time for Rwandans to assess progress, acknowledge achievements and identify areas requiring more effort in the year ahead.